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Understanding the Excluder:

Why Young Children Exclude Their Peers

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Understanding the Excluder:

Why Young Children Exclude Their Peers

by

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Dedication

For Roberta Immordino, who first showed me this path and for Eileen Louie who held my hand and guided me forward at a fork in the road. Your brilliant insights into the minds of children and deep caring for their futures have inspired me in a direction I never thought I'd take.

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Understanding the Excluder:

Why Young Children Exclude Their Peers

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The present study attempts to further our understanding of peer exclusion in young children's social interactions by answering the question, "*What are the motivating factors behind children's usage of exclusion."* Exclusion is very common amongst young children (Corsaro, 1985; Fanger, Frankel & Hazen, 2012), but can also cause harm to the victims (Juvonen & Gross, 2005; MacDonald, Kingsbury & Shaw, 2005). This study used modified grounded theory to examine data collected on the exclusionary behavior of 43 children (mean age 61 months). Extensive data on all incidents of peer exclusion occurring amongst the children, including audio recordings, as well as interviews on children's relationships and social status were used. Results indicated that some exclusion is perpetrated by a particular child if they want *be in control of a social situation* or to help them *be powerful or high status*. An entirely different type of exclusion is the exclusionary behavior that occurs for social reasons; either to *help a friendship* or to support a *group identity*. Exclusion is sometimes simply the result of the particular context surrounding the interaction: either some aspect of the children's school

environment leads to exclusion, the exclusion has become *an ongoing pattern* for the children or the exclusion is perpetrated to *protect the children's play*. Exclusion is also sometimes the *result of the excludee's behavior*—either something they did immediately prior to the incident caused them to be excluded or the way they behave, in general, contributes to them being a target of exclusion. Finally, it appears that the *overall social culture of a particular classroom or specific peer group* can, itself, contribute to the frequency with which children use exclusion. Typically, exclusion occurs for a combination of these reasons and only rarely does an incident of exclusion have only one cause. Implications of these findings for future research as well as practical applications and interventions are discussed.

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PART I. INTRODUCTION AND LITERATURE REVIEW

Chapter 1: Rationale for the Present Study

Because humans are an innately social species (Cosmides & Tooby, 1997; Dunbar, Knight & Power, 1999), peer exclusion is inevitable. This behavior occurs any time a person deliberately does not include a peer in a social interaction in an attempt to control some aspect of that interaction. Exclusion has been previously described amongst 10-14 year olds as including "sneering or turning away or refusing to interact...leaving them out of conversations or groups or social plans or even by boldly stating, 'You can't sit here' or 'You are not invited" (Underwood and Buhrmester, 2007, pp. 412-413). During the preschool years, in particular, peer exclusion may be highly normative (Corsaro, 1985; Lofdahl & Hagglund, 2006). For the most part, children who exclude during early childhood are merely acting out concerns particular to their developmental stage, as exclusion appears to be a social strategy that helps children to meet many different goals (Arnold, Homrok, Ortiz & Stowe, 1999; Corsaro, 1985; Goodwin, 2006; Parker & Gottman, 1989). However, peer exclusion can be extremely harmful for the victims. Being excluded results in both short and long term negative consequences for the victims of exclusion, from decreased pain sensitivity and social withdrawal to increased incidents of depression and self-destruction **(**Crick and Grotpeter, 1995; Juvonen & Gross, 2005; MacDonald, Kingsbury & Shaw, 2005). Thus, a more complete understanding of children's peer exclusion is important. Such knowledge could enable parents, teachers and clinicians to better understand the most effective ways to help both

children victimized by peer exclusion and those who frequently engage in exclusionary behavior.

Thus, the primary aim of the present study is to better explicate *why* young children use exclusion during peer interactions. What could motivate young children to prevent their peers from engaging in particular group interactions? I used modified grounded theory and a qualitative research style to look for common themes in motivations behind exclusive behavior. Forty-three children (mean age 61.4 months) were observed during their normally scheduled outdoor playtime at their preschool. Three observers recorded extensive information on any incidents of peer exclusion that occurred. By looking at the behaviors immediately preceding incidents of exclusion as well as prior interactions between the excluder and the excludee, I will generate hypotheses concerning children's reasons for peer exclusion. In addition, I will discuss implications of this study for encouraging the development of children's social skills and for creating an environment that is less conducive to peer exclusion as well as for future research agendas.

Exclusion as Evolutionarily Adaptive

Exclusion is common amongst humans. Because people depend on others for contact, safety, support and help in meeting basic needs, humans are an innately social species (Cosmides & Tooby, 1997; Dunbar, et al., 1999). As a species that exists in a web of multiple social relationships, groups are constantly being formed, disintegrated and reformed along a variety of dimensions and for a variety of purposes (Kurzban & Leary, 2001). According to social exchange theory, people must cooperate with other

group members to meet group goals, particularly those focused on survival needs (Kurzban & Leary; Leary, 2001). So if a group is to be successful, decisions about whom to include and exclude are extremely important. The ability to detect those who would only try to meet their own needs and would not contribute to group goals becomes paramount (Kurzban & Leary). As a result, humans have developed what evolutionary psychologists refer to as *cheater detection* ability (Leary). Exclusion may have, therefore, evolved not only as a way to ensure that people associate only with those who will not harm them, but also to sanction and control the behavior of "cheaters," thus ensuring that everyone contributes equally to group endeavors.

Each group formation or reformulation provides individuals with constant opportunities to decide *not* to allow someone into a grouping or *not* to include them in a group activity, should they appear to be a poor choice as group member. Thus, in addition to being frequently faced with the decision of whether to exclude others, humans are also constantly negotiating circumstances wherein *they* could potentially be excluded. MacDonald et al. summarize Baumeister and Leary's (1995) work in stating that "inclusion in social groups mean[s] access to nutrition, security and mates, while exclusion undermine[s] survival not just of an individual but also of its genetic lineage" (MacDonald et al., 2005, p. 78). Therefore, decisions of inclusion and exclusion may trigger adaptive responses for both the excluded and the excluder, not just regarding their emotional well being but, ultimately, their physical survival (MacDonald et al.). Such an evolutionarily important behavior deserves to be better understood.

Consequences of Exclusion

Being excluded results in both short and long term negative consequences for the victims of exclusion, from decreased pain sensitivity and social withdrawal to increased incidents of depression and self-destruction **(**Crick, 1996; Crick and Grotpeter, 1995; Juvonen & Gross, 2005; MacDonald et al., 2005; Matthews, 2005; Olafsen & Viemero, 2000). Research on ostracism, when groups or individuals exclude or ignore other groups or individuals (Williams, 2007), provides useful information about the serious repercussions faced by victims of exclusion. Threats of exclusion and threats to physical safety have been found to activate the same part of the brain, the midbrain periaqueductal gray (MacDonald et al.), and both ostracism and threats to physical safety result in similar bodily responses, including increased blood pressure, decreased executive functioning, analgesia (decreased sensitivity to pain), lowered levels of persistence and higher distractibility (Baumeister & DeWall, 2005). In fact, according to *social pain theory* (MacDonald & Leary, 2005) the "pain" of social ostracism closely resembles genuine physical pain. While the actual sensation of pain is absent, the *pain affect*, or the feelings of aversion to a negative stimulus combined with the desire to stop experiencing that stimulus, is identical in both physical injury and social exclusion (MacDonald & Leary).

The above research focuses on adult experiences of exclusion, usually in simulated environments. Although little research is focused directly on the consequences of peer exclusion in children, there is a great deal of research on victims and perpetrators of social or relational aggression. Relational aggression is a form of aggression intended

to cause harm through manipulation of relationships, friendships and social status (Crick & Grotpeter, 1995). Exclusion, gossiping, rumor spreading and attempting to control a friendship are all common relationally aggressive behaviors. Social aggression, in addition to the aforementioned relationally aggressive behaviors, also includes aggressive gestures and facial expressions, such as eye rolling, shrugging and turning away (Archer & Coyne, 2005). For the purposes of this paper, I will use social aggression, because it is a more inclusive construct (Underwood, 2003). Although social aggression and peer exclusion are fundamentally different constructs, there is a significant overlap as exclusion is generally considered to be a common subtype of social aggression. Although peer exclusion may not *always* be a socially aggressive behavior, looking at the consequences of social aggression for both the victims and the aggressors may provide a useful starting point for understanding the possible outcomes of peer exclusion on children.

Like the victims of ostracism, victims of social aggression (including peer exclusion), are negatively impacted by the experience. Victims of social aggression typically have low self-esteem and are lonelier, more submissive and more socially anxious than other children (Crick, et al., 1999). In addition, compared to children who are less victimized, they display more concurrent depressive symptoms and are more at risk for social maladjustment (Crick, 1996; Crick & Grotpeter, 1995), serious depression and disordered eating by adolescence (Matthews, 2005). And the perpetrators, too, may experience lasting harm and negative outcomes as a result of their usage of this behavior. By middle childhood, those who use social aggression to control their peers tend to be

more socially isolated, have lower self-esteem and are more likely to become socially rejected or victims themselves, compared to children who use less social aggression (Crick et al., 2006; Crick, et al., 1999). In adolescence, they are also more likely to become depressed than other youths (Crick, et al., 1999) and young women who use social aggression have been found to exhibit more symptoms of antisocial behavior, self-harm behaviors and bulimic symptoms (Werner & Crick, 1999). If peer exclusion does have some consequences that are similar to those of social aggression, then it appears that there may be harmful repercussions for all parties involved in peer exclusion.

Chapter 2: Literature Review: Research on Why Children Exclude

In spite of the potentially severe consequences of exclusion, there are some significant problems with how exclusion is currently understood and studied. First, the term "exclusion" is used in behavioral science literature to refer to actions as disparate as expulsion from school and when a child assigns a marginal pretend play role to a peer, giving them little opportunity to actively take part in the game. In fact, there appear to be at least ten separate definitions of exclusion used in the behavioral sciences. To add to the confusion, distinct words and even distinct lines of research refer to the same interpersonal phenomenon (e.g., interpersonal rejection, ostracism, exclusion). Because of the great breadth of terminology, usages and behaviors, it is difficult to assess what, at this point, is known about the process of excluding a person or group of persons. This problem has been exacerbated because exclusion is often considered to be merely one type of behavior under the umbrella of a larger phenomenon (i.e., exclusion as a type of social aggression or peer rejection). Although exclusion has been studied in a variety of fields for a variety of reasons, no holistic approach to exclusion has yet been explored.

Research to date on exclusion has focused on some very specific aspects of the phenomena (e.g., the physical response of the victim, how being excluded may compromise executive functioning; MacDonald, et al., 2005; Baumeister & DeWall, 2005). But there are other facets to understanding exclusion that remain largely untouched in the literature. In particular, as past research efforts on exclusion have concentrated primarily on adult victims of exclusion (Leary, 2001; Williams, Forgas &

von Hippel, 2005), there is little information about the perpetrators of exclusion or about young children's usage of exclusion. Prior work has demonstrated that adults and children of all ages do exclude their peers, but some aspects of this exclusionary behavior appear to be particularly prevalent among preschool-aged children. However, little is known about *why* some children might choose exclusion during a particular social interaction. What motivates young children, in particular, to frequently prevent their peers from engaging in certain group interactions?

Previous research has suggested a number of developmentally normative reasons for why children might utilize exclusion during interactions with their peers. When engaging in *defensive ostracism* (Williams & Zadro, 2001), children may exclude in order to protect themselves from future physical or emotional harm (Kurzban & Leary, 2001; Leary, 2001; Williams & Zadro). Children may also use exclusion in an attempt to control their play (Corsaro, 1985; Parker & Gottman, 1989), or to maintain order within a social group (Goodwin, 2006). Additionally, peer exclusion can be used to establish commonalities, to protect a relationship (Parker & Gottman) or simply to avoid conflict that would occur with a greater number of interaction partners (Corsaro, 2005). Finally, it is possible that exclusion may be used to intentionally harm a victim (Crick, Casas & Mosher, 1997; Paquette & Underwood, 1999). The variety of motivations suggests that, for preschoolers, direct peer exclusion may be a normative strategy for meeting individual social needs (Corsaro, 1985; Parker & Gottman).

Defensive Ostracism

As mentioned previously, exclusion may be partially the result of an adaptive survival response for a group living species. If people are to have sufficient resources, protect themselves from potentially harmful individuals, and be part of smoothly functioning groups, they must all occasionally engage in some form of exclusion (Kurzban & Leary, 2001; Leary, 2001; Williams & Zadro, 2001). Although the work regarding such *defensive ostracism* is primarily theoretical and addresses only adult interactions, it appears that children actually do engage in similar behavior. Even young children will reject or exclude a peer who has just been verbally or physically aggressive to them (Arnold, et al., 1999; Barner-Berry, 1986). Arnold, et al. observed children's expressions of aggression (verbal and physical) and occurrences of peer rejection (either exclusion or expressions of dislike) during teacher led group activities at a daycare center (mean age 56 months). Their results demonstrated that children were frequently rejected by peers after having been physically aggressive themselves. Although some of the very direct styles of rejection they recorded were non-exclusionary in nature, i.e., "you look stupid," the majority seemed to be exclusionary; i.e., "get out of here!" (Arnold, et al., p. 188). Their results showed that the two co-occurred (rejection following aggression) far more than was expected by chance, demonstrating that even young children may understand exclusion as a way to protect themselves.

Controlling Play

Successful play is vital to young children as it serves many important purposes: to help children manage their fears and anxiety (by playing about them; Piaget, 1962), to aid

them in practicing for adult roles and responsibilities (Bateson, 2005), to help children assimilate new or difficult information (Piaget) or to help children master advanced peer interaction skills and develop self-control (Vygotsky, 1967). Therefore, successful play appears to be an extremely important activity for many aspects of children's development. Because young children are still learning to successfully communicate with peers and to manage their own agenda while simultaneously addressing their peers' needs, it is difficult for children to maintain high quality productive play with large groups, unfamiliar peers, or less socially skilled peers (Parker & Gottman, 1989). Therefore, successful and high level play is most likely to occur amongst small groups of socially skilled children who know each other well (Matthews, 1978). To prevent interference that could thwart their aspirations for successful play (Corsaro, 1985; 2005), a child may exclude their peers.

Establishing Commonalities

Parker and Gottman (1989) point out that young children's emerging social comparison abilities are consistently focused on finding commonalities with peers. "Children becom[ing] friends sometimes give the appearance of going to almost any length to find commonality, regardless of how frivolous (A: 'We both have chalk on our hands' B: 'Right!')" (p. 110). If establishing commonalities is so important to friendships, perhaps this provides an additional window into why some peer exclusion might occur. Corsaro (1985) suggests that by opposing an entry attempt from a new child, two (or more) playmates can find a commonality with each other on which to build their relationship. In opposition to another child, they are *with* each other. Corsaro observed

two children repeatedly rejecting a third child's entry attempts so that the "rejection itself had become a game that these children were playing together." (1985, p. 155) Through exclusion of others, children may build a commonality with each other and, thus, a friendship.

Protecting Relationships

At each stage of development, children's friendships are reflective of the developmental concerns of that age (Parker & Gottman, 1989). Therefore, during early childhood, friendships are primarily focused on successful play interactions (Parker & Gottman). Although friendships may center around play, the relationships themselves are still important. Sociologist William Corsaro's (1985) work on young children's play and peer cultures found that the children seemed to be primarily concerned with two interrelated goals: 1) the wish to participate socially in interactions with peers and 2) the desire to protect any ongoing interactive space. The friction between these two, often opposing, goals led to many instances of exclusion within the peer group. As discussed above (Controlling Play), when children are engaged in successful play, they will work to protect the interaction from disruption. But the sense of community and the relationships formed are also an important cause of exclusion. As Corsaro (2005) described it, "the children want to keep sharing what they are already sharing and see others as a threat to the community they've established" (p.141).

Maintaining Order in a Peer Group

Anthropologist Marjorie Harness Goodwin's ethnographic fieldwork and conversation analyses of 10-12 year old girls' peer group behavior demonstrates how

exclusion was used amongst her subjects to establish order in their peer group by either removing or sanctioning uncooperative group members (2002, 2006). According to Goodwin (2006), “Social exclusion and ridicule constitute powerful ways of delineating the group and dealing with those who offend the social order” (p. 213). Goodwin noted that in-group members were most often sanctioned for attempts to raise their own status above that of the other group members (2006). Because even subtle ostracism is a distinctly unpleasant experience, such threats of exclusion typically functioned to control group member’s behavior. Only when a girl repeatedly didn't "take the hint" was she subject to direct exclusion or public humiliation. Marginal group members, however, were more likely to be sanctioned for inappropriate behavior or simply for being present (Goodwin, 2006). Similarly, Adler and Adler (1995) suggested that elite middle-school “popular” cliques used exclusion of non-members to establish and maintain their power and authority as well as to manage in-group / out-group relationships. Thus, exclusion was used to more firmly establish group boundaries and to induce conformity in both the in-group and marginal group members (Goodwin, 2002, 2006). Prior work has shown that preschoolers will also exclude those children who do not comply with group rules or exhibit desired behaviors (Arnold, et al., 1999; Lofdahl & Hagglund, 2006; Sheldon, 1996).

Avoiding Conflict

Children may also exclude their peers in order to avoid potential conflicts. They may use exclusion when there has been past conflict with a particular peer or simply because larger groups tend to create a greater amount of conflict (Corsaro, 2005). Corsaro

noted that exclusion is more common in some children's peer groups than amongst others. For example, middle-class American preschoolers utilized exclusion more commonly than the Italian nursery school children he studied (Corsaro). This may be because some cultural groups are more comfortable with verbal conflict as well as the debates and discussions necessary for large group play. In fact, he described how the Italian children seemed to relish engaging in a ritualized form of conflict with their peers (the Cantilena; Corsaro, 2005). Therefore, in classroom cultures where the children are less comfortable with conflict, debates and opposition, they may exclude in order to avoid the negotiations that would be necessary for successful large group play.

Intent to Harm

Exclusion is commonly considered to be a type of social aggression (Crick, et al., 1997; Paquette & Underwood, 1999). If exclusion is, indeed, a type of aggression, then peer exclusion would, at least sometimes, be conducted with intent to harm the victim (Bushman & Anderson, 2001). However, as noted earlier, young children commonly exclude either to protect themselves or to control their play/peers in some way (Corsaro, 1985; Parker & Gottman, 1989). Just as a toddler pushing another child away from a mutually desired toy does not usually stem from the "intent to cause harm," a young child telling another "you can't play" is not usually trying to cause pain. Therefore, intent to cause harm is a possible cause of peer exclusion, but is unlikely to be the primary motivation, particularly during early childhood.

In sum, the motive for exclusion may occasionally be to ensure that an individual or group is safe and, therefore, able to survive. But it is more often used by young

children for a variety of other reasons: to gain control over some aspect of their play or their peer group, to protect an interactive space so as to ensure successful play, to establish or protect a relationship or to help avoid direct conflict during interactions. In addition, it is possible that exclusion is enacted to cause harm to the victim.

As is obvious from the limited amount of prior work mentioned above, little previous research has focused on motivations for exclusion amongst young children. Those works that *have* addressed the topic typically considered one particular motive (e.g., defensive ostracism, Arnold, et al., 1999) and explored it in depth. No work has yet looked at the variety of reasons for which it is possible to exclude. To uncover the true breadth of exclusion motivations amongst young children, my research aims to examine every possible provocation for peer exclusion as well as to determine which previously discussed motivations were actually used by young children in a naturalistic setting.

PART II: METHODS

Chapter 3: Methods

Overview of the Present Study

My primary research question was to determine *what are the motivating factors behind children's usage of exclusion*. To answer this question, I used qualitative data related to multiple incidents of peer exclusion observed amongst young children. With the help of three research assistants, I collected data for this study on 42 focal children who were observed outdoors for incidents of peer exclusion. This project was originally conceived as both a quantitative and qualitative exploration of exclusion. Therefore, both quantitative and qualitative data about exclusionary behavior were compiled and audio recordings of the incidents were preserved. Children were interviewed to obtain information regarding their social preferences and the head teacher was also interviewed for additional information about children's social behavior. Qualitative analyses of data were used to explore what the motivating factors behind children's usage of exclusion might be. A grounded theory approach has allowed me to build theory regarding children's usage of exclusion and to interpret data without positing particular hypotheses, theories or possible answers to my questions ahead of time.

Grounded Theory

In the early stages of gathering information about a previously uninvestigated topic, exploratory research is necessary to begin understanding what questions are appropriate as well as the full scope of a particular behavior (Gilgun, 2005). Because

little prior research exists on why young children exclude their peers, an exploratory, qualitative methodology has been chosen for this project. Conducting inductive research allowed me the opportunity to look carefully at the data with as few preconceived ideas about how to interpret it as possible. With this "innocent" viewpoint, I was then able to construct theory based on what actually seemed to emerge from the data I had collected. This flexibility enabled me to discover many factors influencing the children's choice to exclude that I would not have been able to see with a more deductive approach to the research. (Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Merriam, 2009).

The use of grounded theory has also allowed me to create theory that is easily understandable to laypersons who work with young children, such as teachers and parents, as well as to experienced researchers. According to Glaser & Strauss, "It is more difficult for laymen in a particular area to understand a formal theory, because of its abstractness and presumed general applicability. It will have to be explained for them to understand its usefulness, and chances are they will not be able to apply it themselves" (1967, p. 240) Additionally, I aimed to develop theory that could be easily generalized, which Glaser and Strauss suggest is an important benefit of using grounded theory. My hope is that my results will be generalizable, not only to preschoolers on classroom playgrounds, but to explaining why *any* young child *anywhere* might exclude. The approachability of this work can, therefore, provide a starting point for both researchers and laypersons trying to understand exclusion used in *any* social setting by people of *any* age.

It is important to note that the nature of my data precluded my use of a pure grounded theory approach. I have instead modified my methods based on a number of circumstances specific to this research project. First, a true grounded theory approach would suggest that the researcher know nothing about their topic before beginning work and remain as innocent of current literature as possible. The researcher ought to "study an area without any preconceived theory that dictates, prior to the research, 'relevancies' in concepts and hypotheses" (Glaser & Strauss, 1967, p. 33). Because I have been working to understand young children's exclusion for a number of years now, I am already versed in much of the current literature on this topic. Therefore it is inevitable that, before this project began, I had already thought about and developed my own ideas regarding this subject. Although I have worked to look at the data with no preconceived notions, based on my prior knowledge, this cannot be considered a traditional grounded theory analysis.

Second, because I used research assistants in the data collection, not all data comes originally from the primary researcher, an unusual circumstance in research employing grounded theory (Merriam, 2009). Third, data were collected prior to coding and interpretation. According to Glaser and Strauss, "the analyst jointly collects, codes and analyzes his data and decides what data to collect next and where to find them" (1967, p. 45). However, as I first used my data for quantitative analyses on how and which children used exclusion, the present qualitative analysis was completed four years after the initial collection of data. For all of these reasons, this work must be considered *modified* grounded theory (Corbin & Strauss, 2007). Finally, although many qualitative researchers choose specifically to follow a Glaserian or a Straussian approach (Glaser &

Strauss, 1967; LaRossa, 2005; Strauss, 1987), I have attempted to use basic tenets of grounded theory that are common to both approaches in a way that is most appropriate to my data.

Although my grounded theory methods were not pure, I believe that the modifications have not introduced undue bias into the results. In fact, the categories that emerged during my data analysis are quite different from those I had examined previously. It is my hope that this indicates a lack of bias based on my previous knowledge. I also feel that the length of time between initial data collection and analysis actually helped me to understand the work. Because I had not looked at the raw data in some time and my impressions of the subjects had faded somewhat, I was able to see the data more clearly. It appears that these particular limitations are quite common in grounded theory research. It is extremely rare for researchers to know nothing of their topic when beginning a field study and it is quite common for analysis to be delayed to the end of the data collection (M. McDermott, personal communication, April, 13, 2011).

Participants

The sample consisted of 42 children (21 girls) ranging in age from 54-73 months (mean age = 61.4 months, SD = 5.5) who were enrolled in a half-day University laboratory preschool located in a large city in the southwestern U.S. Children attending the preschool were predominantly white (83%) and middle class, with highly educated parents—according to the school's records, 96% of parents had a bachelor's degree. Written parental consent was obtained for all participating children, according to IRB Human Subjects guidelines. Participants were drawn from three preschool classes (two 4-

5 year old classes and one pre-kindergarten class) and represented 93% of the total population of these classrooms. These classrooms were chosen as they contained the oldest children in the school. The classes not used in the study were comprised of two and three year olds. Appendix A features a brief description of each subject to aid in understanding general peer dynamics. It is important to be aware that there was a set of triplets in one of the 4-5 year old classrooms; Elizabeth, Lauren and Susan. It is likely that their presence in a classroom of only 16 children had a significant impact on the behavior of the peer group at times.

Field Site

As mentioned above, data were collected on the outdoor playground of a university laboratory preschool. Each classroom of children, divided roughly by age, had access to this play yard for approximately one hour per day, at a time specified by the school administration. Once outside, children were generally free to choose from a variety of activities. The outdoor area was approximately thirty feet by sixty feet and contained one extensive playscape that covered approximately one quarter of the total area of the classroom. The playscape was located in the center of the yard and underneath it was loose sand. The playscape contained a suspension bridge, slides, a high tower, and numerous ladders and tunnels. Platforms were at a variety of heights and provided many places for children to play, not only on the playscape, but in the small defined sand areas underneath the playscape. In particular, children tended to congregate under the slides, in a play “house” that was part of the structure and in the protected area between the bridge and tallest tower of the playscape. Around the playscape was a paved track that children

used for riding scooters and tricycles as well as for running and walking. Against the classroom doors was a long, paved, covered patio where more structured activities sometimes took place (gardening, dramatic play props, a water table, typing, etc.). At the far side of the play yard, opposite the patio, was a large shed containing materials for the children's use. The children had free access to a variety of ride-on toys and sand play materials in this shed, but other shed items were only taken out at the teachers' discretion. To the right of the patio there was a garden and a small "gas station" structure. To the left was another play house, a tire swing (divided by its suspending chains into three sections) and an additional small sand area with construction digger toys, which was rarely used by the participants. Once children were outside, they were typically not allowed to return inside without a teacher's permission. Children commonly went in to use the bathroom or to access their personal cubbies.

On a typical day there were 12-16 children in the outdoor area and two to four adults. In each class there was one head teacher—an experienced educator with a master's degree and over ten years of classroom experience, as well as a variety of assistant teachers. These assistant teachers ranged from graduate students who had been working in the classroom for multiple years to undergraduates having their first experience in a preschool classroom. As a result, their teaching abilities varied greatly.

When they were outside, the children might play on their own, talk with adults or other children, simply watch others or choose to play with their peers. When children did play with other children, these games ranged from quiet two-person exchanges to loud, movement-oriented large group activities. Common play included: riding on the tire

swing, “cooking” or building structures with the sand, running and climbing around the yard and playscape, riding scooters and trikes around the path and engaging in a variety of dramatic play games. Because two of the classrooms had their outdoor time as soon as their school day began, children would often arrive slowly during the first ten minutes of classroom time.

Observation Procedures

The study consisted primarily of direct observation of preschool children during their naturalistic, regularly scheduled outdoor playtime. Data collection on the playground consisted of three major components: 1) on-the-spot coding of exclusion and other types of social aggression, 2) audio recordings of focal children's vocalizations, and 3) narrative observation of focal children’s behavior. All three components were used in tandem to create a thorough triangulation of all exclusion incidents and the circumstances surrounding them.

Children were observed individually using a ‘focal child’ approach, in which a particular focal child was observed for all behaviors related to being a perpetrator of peer exclusion. Each day, two or three children were selected to be focal children before they went outside with their classmates. Those children who assented were offered a vest or backpack equipped with a wireless microphone system and transmitter. While wearing the vests or backpacks, the children were audible to observers and any verbal interaction was recorded, but they were otherwise left undirected and able to play as they chose. During this time, each focal child was observed and audiotaped individually for approximately 15 minutes with equipment located in the play yard. After each child in

the class was invited to participate for one 15-minute observation, researchers offered children a second opportunity to wear the equipment. With one exception, all children participated at least two times. The child that was only observed only once was removed from the study. The mean observation time for the 42 children who had at least two observation times was 32.3 minutes (Range = 26-46 min., SD = 5.8). During the quantitative phase of this project, we wanted to ensure that children who were observed for longer periods did not have more opportunities to exhibit exclusion so we assessed the relationship between number of minutes observed and total exclusion (divided by number of minutes observed) and found no correlation ($r(43) = .032$, *ns*).

Three observers recorded each focal child's behavior from within the play yard. All observers were equipped with wireless headphones to hear the focal child's language. One observer wrote a running narrative of the child's actions, including with whom they interacted as well as what they did and where they were in the yard. The other two observers used an event coding method to record all incidents of exclusion. Each time the observers witnessed a behavior that could be exclusionary, they recorded as much information about the event as possible: which children were involved, exactly what happened that could constitute exclusion, what was said related to the incident, and what happened immediately before and after the incident.

Because undergraduate students frequently used the laboratory preschool to observe preschool children's behavior, the participating children were accustomed to seeing observers in their outdoor play space. The outdoor area was also large enough that children were frequently out of the hearing range of teachers. The use of wireless audio

equipment allowed researchers to maintain distance from the children and to mask when each focal child was actually being observed, while still hearing their conversations. Exploratory data collection from our study demonstrated that, although a few children were aware of the microphone when they first put it on, they appeared to quickly forget about it and did not seem to monitor their behavior during the period they were wearing the microphone. Therefore, we are reasonably certain that we were able to observe exclusion as it would naturally occur and that this behavior did not change, disappear or "go underground" as a result of our research methods.

Collecting Exclusion Data

While children were being observed, each incident of exclusion witnessed was written up in detail by one of the two "exclusion observers." Specific information collected on each exclusion incident and the circumstances surrounding it included:

- who was present
- which children were involved in the exclusion (excluders, excludees and bystanders)
- whether any teachers were nearby or intervened in the incident
- what all of the involved children were doing when the event occurred
- exactly what was said over the course of the incident
- any possibly relevant body language that was observed
- whether the exclusion was successful (i.e., the excludee was successfully prevented from entering the play)
- exactly what time the incident occurred

- the teacher-child ratio for that day
- where in the outdoor area the event took place.

In addition, the third researcher, the "narrator," kept a running record of the focal child's activities. The narrator recorded details regarding whom the focal child was with, what they did, where they went and what interactions they engaged in during the 15 minute period of the observation. They tried to capture as much detail as possible about the child's social interactions as well as about any language spoken or exclusion used. As suggested by Lofland, Snow, Anderson and Lofland (2006), all three observers logged this primary data as the actual observations were taking place, thus minimizing the inherent biases introduced in recalling events after the fact (Lofland, et al.). Data were then typed up into more comprehensive "field notes" the same day as the observation, ensuring that the data were recorded while the researcher's memories were still fresh (Emerson, Fretz and Shaw, 1995).

Culling Exclusion Data

Upon finishing observations for the day, the researchers considered each exclusion incident they had recorded and typed up only data on the behaviors they still believed to be exclusionary. At a later time, all recorded incidents of exclusion were examined again. Three researchers looked at the available data regarding each incident and discussed whether the incident was, indeed, peer exclusion. Audio recordings were used to ensure an accurate understanding of particular incidents of exclusion, to clarify any uncertain language and to illuminate ambiguous circumstances surrounding an incident of exclusion. When necessary, a research assistant listened to the audio recording

and transcribed all vocalizations. In addition, they took notes describing the circumstances surrounding the exclusion and their current interpretation of what had actually occurred.

Only those events that all agreed were intentionally exclusionary were then included in the data analysis. Because I had requested that the observers record anything that seemed at all exclusionary, there were many "possible" exclusion incidents than we decided were not actually exclusion. 161 incidents of exclusion were used in my data analysis, but there were at least twice as many initially recorded.

In the earlier quantitative work conducted with this data, I analyzed only exclusion perpetrated by a focal child. However, for this qualitative project, I included any incident of exclusion witnessed and recorded during the course of the study, regardless of whether the focal child was the excluder, so as to increase the number of exclusion incidents available for analysis. In traditional grounded theory work, the researcher continues to collect data and look for additional subjects after completing initial data analysis (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). Researchers are thus able to tailor their selection of additional subjects to the information they need. Qualitative researchers typically continue observing their sample "until they find that they are learning little or nothing that adds to their emerging understanding, thus reaching the point of theoretical saturation" (Gilgun, 2005, p. 43). Because this method was not available to me, I was concerned with trying to "collect the richest possible data" (Lofland, et al., 2006, p. 15) from the available sources.

By including all incidents of exclusion, regardless of perpetrator, I was, in effect, transforming my sample from a statistical sample into a theoretical sample (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). While "statistical sampling is done to obtain accurate evidence on distributions of people among categories to be used in descriptions or verifications," "theoretical sampling is done to discover categories and their properties, and to suggest the interrelationships into a theory." (Glaser & Strauss, p. 62). In qualitative field studies, key informants can be invaluable to interpreting data and thus developing theory. Therefore, it is typical that some subjects are more central to the body of data than others (Weiss, 1994). Therefore, I was not concerned with obtaining the exact same amount of data from each subject.

Analyzing Data in atlas.ti

A qualitative data analysis program, *atlas.ti*, was used for this project. For each observation of each child, I combined the records of the narrator and the two exclusion observers along with any transcriptions or additional details gleaned from listening to the audio recordings into a final comprehensive narration. There were, therefore, multiple primary documents for each child (e.g., Ida 1, Ida 2, and Ida 3) detailing everything the child had done during that particular 15-minute observation but particularly rich in details regarding any incidents of exclusion. As Lofland et al. (2006) suggest, through team research it is possible to better triangulate one's data. The different sources of data thus served to minimize biases inherent to single observer research by providing multiple perspectives and viewpoints on the same incident.

This combined narration was then entered as a *primary document* into atlas.ti for further analyses. Atlas.ti enables the user to highlight and mark specific sections of text in primary documents with either a brief qualitative *code* (e.g., "child-child conflict," "maintaining in-group boundaries," "power gained through exclusion") or with a memo or note written about the data or the codes. The user is able to mark different sections of text with previously used (or new) codes as well as to link various codes, memos and pieces of text to each other.

Examples

Quotations from these primary documents were used as examples to highlight research findings in the results chapters. To prepare these examples, I used the audio recordings to transcribe all examples according to standard Conversation Analysis guidelines (Nosfinger, 1991). See Appendix B for a list of transcription conventions used.

Child Sociometric Assessments and Interviews

Children were also interviewed to obtain further information about their peers and peer relationships. Sociometric nomination methods were administered to each child individually (Black & Hazen, 1990) to quantitatively assess each child's social status (social acceptance, rejection and dominance). Children were shown photos of their classmates and were asked to identify them to ensure that the children recognized and could name their classmates. Because data were collected toward the end of the school year, when children had known each other and been in a classroom together for almost six months, almost all children were able to identify each of their classmates correctly, and it is likely that stable social preferences had long been established.

They were then asked to tell us or point to the *children they most liked* ("Show me the three friends you most like to play with."). Because of the quantitative goals of this study, they were encouraged to name exactly three children who were their favorites. However, more than half of the children named either more or less than three peers as those they most liked to play with[1]. After children identified their top three friends, they were then prompted to *identify those they did not like* ("Show me three kids you'd rather not play with as much."). Because many of the children were old enough to think about socially acceptable responses, researchers qualified the question if necessary (e.g., "who maybe you don't like to play with as much sometimes") and encouraged children who were unwilling to speak the names aloud to simply point to those they did not like. For this question as well, children were encouraged to name three rejected peers but commonly named a greater or lesser number of peers they disliked.

We also asked children a third question designed to assess social dominance, or which children were most powerful amongst their peers. Each child was asked to select children based on the questions, "Which kids in the class decide what everyone should play?" "When you are playing with other kids, which kids' ideas get played about?" and "Which kids in your class are the leaders?" The same question was asked in three different ways because, in prior research, preschool children have had a difficult time assessing the social power of their peers (Hawley, Johnson, Mize & McNamara, 2007) and our preliminary testing revealed that multiple questions helped them to better

[1] For the quantitative study we then worked with children to clarify their "top three" preferences.

understand the construct of social dominance. Although three questions were used, each child only selected one set of peers they felt were powerful.

When quantitative work was done using this data, each child was given a continuous score of "social acceptance," calculated by adding up how many times that child was chosen by their same- classroom peers as one of the three top choices for "someone you like to play with" and dividing by the number of children from that child's classroom who participated in nominating their peers, to create an equivalent metric across classrooms. They were also given a score of "social rejection," calculated similarly from peer nominations of "someone you'd rather not play with as much." Finally, each child was given a continuous score of "social dominance," using the number of times they were nominated by their classmates (as a child who was a leader) and dividing by the total number of children participating from that classroom. Because children's reasons for excluding peers might be related to how well liked (or how disliked or powerful) certain children were by their peer group, this data, although quantitative, was considered useful in forming an overall picture of how well regarded children were by their peers.

All three questions generated conversation about the children's peer preferences. Although some children merely answered the above questions, a number of children provided additional details about their playmate preferences or social experiences. I transcribed this information and entered it into atlas.ti for analysis. Three lengthy open-ended interviews primarily about exclusion were also transcribed and used during data

analyses. Transcriptions of relevant portions of these interviews are available in Appendix C.

Teacher Interviews

The principal investigator also interviewed the head teachers from each classroom where data were collected. The interview was semi-structured, with particular questions asked each time, but also with space for teachers to provide information of interest about specific children relating to exclusion and social behavior. Teachers were asked about which children in their class were:

- dominant
- neglected, ignored or forgotten about by their peers
- well-liked by either same or opposite sex peers
- actively disliked or rejected
- likely to exclude their peers or
- frequently excluded by peers.

Teachers were also asked what they felt about and how they handled exclusion in their preschool classroom. Any information relevant to children's usage of exclusion or the social circumstances surrounding exclusion was transcribed and entered into atlas.ti as a primary document.

The Researcher

Although I was neither particularly exclusionary nor a frequent victim of exclusion as a child, I can easily recall those moments I was deliberately left out of a social group. It is harder to remember times I excluded others, probably because it had

little emotional impact on me at the time. I was also unaware of the potential cruelty of exclusion or the negative impact my behavior would have had on anyone I excluded. As an adult, this line of research has made me particularly cognizant of inclusionary and exclusionary behavior witnessed in my everyday life. I pay attention to in-groups, out-groups and marginal group members as well as to the power structure amongst my peers. I also feel obligated to object if I witness a peer being excluded.

In addition to my own experiences with exclusion, I believe that my background in a number of different fields has significantly impacted how I looked at the data and interpreted children's exclusionary behaviors. The data collection took place during my second year of graduate school in a Human Development and Family Sciences program at The University of Texas at Austin. Prior to attending graduate school, I was an early childhood educator for nine years. During my time as a teacher, I independently studied gender, social education and aggression and then began to serve as a teacher and parent educator on these topics. Prior to teaching, my background was in anthropology and primatology. Each of these experiences has naturally impacted the perspective from which I approach my research and how I view children's peer interactions.

As a researcher in Human Development and Family Sciences, I am likely to pay attention to the contextual factors that influence behavior. In other words, I am cognizant of influences originating from the family or those inherent to a school setting that could make children more likely to exclude. As this graduate program is primarily focused on quantitative data analysis, my training in quantitative research is also more extensive than my background in qualitative.

Additionally, as someone who studies peer culture, I am interested in how group behavior impacts a child. Because of this perspective, I am likely to focus on understanding the power dynamics of a social group and am interested in knowing about children's ongoing relationships as well as the histories of such relationships. I even consider the relationships of those children who are not actively involved in the exclusion (but may be present) relevant to understanding exclusion.

Because of my background as an educator, I consider the role that normative development plays in children's behavior to be very important. I have tried to always consider what would be typical for each subject, given their developmental age.

As someone who has worked with teachers and parents to help them understand the social education of young children, I am highly aware of how difficult it is for untrained adults (e.g., undergraduate assistant teachers) to effectively assist with peer conflict. In our culture, social skills are not taught directly or concretely and so it is challenging for many adults to recognize exclusionary behavior and give appropriate guidance.

Finally as an anthropologist, I am interested in the universals of human behavior, and as a primatologist I tend to look for behaviors that might serve some evolutionary or survival-oriented purpose. Each of these perspectives has influenced the way that I understand the causes of young children's social behavior. It is my belief that this broad range of past experiences has allowed me to better see the great variety of reasons that children exclude.

It is also important to consider how my relationship with the subjects may have impacted my research. Before collecting data, we spent time in the classes getting to know the children and becoming better acquainted with the teachers and their particular classrooms. We commonly sat with the children while they were engaged in classroom activities or stood nearby while they were playing outdoors. To minimize behavioral change as a result of our presence, we acted more in the capacity of friend or companion to the children than as a rule-setting adult. For example, I ignored misbehavior, wouldn't help solve social problems and tried to laugh at their jokes. They would often tell us about what they were doing and occasionally invited us to join in the play in some minor role (e.g., purchasing food at their store). Corsaro (1985) used a similar methodology to successfully integrate himself into preschool peer culture. As a result, I believe that the children were more willing to participate in the research and seemed to calmly accept our presence. Additionally, I was on friendly terms with the teachers, who were aware of my background as a preschool teacher. They awarded me an "insider status" (Lofland, et al., 2006), which helped me to learn important information about the children's backgrounds. They would also sometimes tell me about classroom events they found interesting or any particularly important social interactions that had occurred amongst the children.

Chapter 4: Working with the Data

Coding

Because this study is qualitative and used emergent theory (Glaser & Strauss, 1967) to analyze and interpret why children exclude, it was not possible to derive hypotheses in advance of the data analysis. Instead, an inductive process allowed themes to emerge during analysis, which then guided the interpretation of the results and thus the development of theory based on these interpretations. Throughout coding, there were a number of questions and ideas that I continually returned to. Because my overarching question was "*what are the motivating factors behind children's usage of exclusion*," a number of secondary questions were particularly relevant:

- What behaviors, from both the excluder and the excludee, preceded children's usage of exclusion?
- What happened in the initial social interaction between two children that led one of them to use peer exclusion?
- What did the excluder stand to gain (or lose) from excluding a peer?
- What do we know about these children and their relationships that could explain why some of them might not want to include others?
- What do we know about the excluder's and the excludee's social skills that might aid in understanding why exclusion was a useful behavior?

- Based on what is known about all of the children and their relationships, what would have been likely to happen if the excluded child took part in the interaction (instead of being excluded)?
- What did the excluding child tend to focus on in their social interactions that might lead them to use exclusion?

I began my coding in atlas.ti with one round of deductive coding on each of the primary documents. There were a number of descriptive codes that I had decided to use before beginning work with the data. Each verbalization was coded with the speaker's name, allowing me to look at all of the utterances for a particular individual. I also coded each exclusion incident for a variety of details:

- each child that excluded their peers
- each child that was excluded
- any children who were present during the incident but not involved (bystanders)
- whether adults were present or intervened
- what categories of exclusion I had previously determined this incident fit into (physical, mitigated, etc.)
- whether the exclusion was successful or unsuccessful.

As suggested by Strauss (1987) and LaRossa (2005), data were then inductively coded in three steps. I first used "open" or "initial" coding to analyze the data for key concepts and variables (Glaser & Strauss, 1967; La Rossa; Lofland, et al., 2006). At this time data was coded for any relevant social behaviors or any interesting interactions that occurred between the children. For example, I developed codes for conflict, physical

aggression, verbal intimidation, deliberate inclusion and correcting/teaching one's peers, amongst others. My coding primarily focused on those behaviors that indicated what the children's relationships were like, how socially skilled they were, how they behaved in group situations, whether they used positive (prosocial) or negative tactics to deal with peers and what, specifically, those tactics were. I coded each primary document once and then began again. I repeated coding of all primary documents a number of times until I felt like I had captured all social behaviors that seemed relevant and had found as many examples of each behavior as possible.

As I became more familiar with the data and the behavioral codes mentioned above took shape, I began to look for the reasons that exclusion might occur. For each incident of exclusion, I carefully examined the circumstances, people and environment surrounding the event. When a clear possibility emerged for why a child might have decided not to include a peer, I created a code for that particular exclusion reason. For some incidents, an explanation was immediately clear (e.g., a child is told to leave the game immediately after doing something they had been told *not* to do). Other exclusion events were more difficult to interpret and so I coded for a number of possible reasons. I continued to code through each primary document repeatedly until I reached the point of saturation. Because I used the constant comparative method of grounded theory analysis (Lofland, et al., 2006), as each code was assigned, I compared it to other incidents given the same code to ensure that coding was consistent. In addition, I entered memos into atlas.ti as soon as possible interpretations or important facts regarding a behavior occurred to me.

This constant comparison was fleshed out by the use of Strauss's "axial coding" step (1987; LaRossa, 2005). After completing the initial coding, I looked at each individual code to further ensure consistency. I compared all incidents marked with a particular code and removed any incidents that no longer seemed to fit my conception of the code. I also deleted any codes that didn't appear to represent a real concept and combined codes that described the same phenomenon.

At this time, I also thought about how to clarify whether a particular explanation was, indeed, the cause of the exclusion. While writing extensive memos for each possible exclusion explanation I determined what information would be necessary to substantiate a particular cause of exclusion. For example, to establish whether a particular child was excluded because they were disliked by the excluder, I needed to go back to that excluder's interview to determine whether the excludee had been mentioned as a particularly disliked peer.

While engaging in axial coding, I began to consider how the concepts I was coding for might be related to each other. Glaser & Strauss (1967) refer to this as "integrating categories and their properties" in the second step of their constant comparative method. In atlas.ti, I began to link codes to each other and define their relationships. For example, "trying to preserve a friendship" was similar to "trying to establish a relationship" but both were a part of the more comprehensive exclusion explanation "friendship related." This was merely the first step to developing a smaller set of higher-level codes.

Analyses/Developing Theory

These initial steps towards integrating categories then allowed me to finally engage in "selective" (Strauss, 1987; La Rossa, 2005) or "focused" (Lofland, et al., 2006; Emerson, Fretz & Shaw, 1995) coding of the data. In the constant comparative method this step is termed "delimiting the theory" (Glaser & Strauss, 1967, pg. 109). This coding was directed at a more selective and conceptual interpretation of the data by focusing in on key concepts and amassing codes into higher-level groupings. I examined each exclusion explanation as well as the relationships between explanations (established during axial coding) and then grouped related reasons together to come up with overarching categories. I also linked codes and memos together in atlas.ti to create visual representations of the relationships between various concepts.

Through selective coding, a theoretical framework began to emerge related to the variety of reasons why children might exclude their peers. It became apparent that although children excluded their peers for a great variety of reasons, there were a few overarching categories into which most of these reasons could be classified. This allowed me to develop substantive theory regarding the reasons that children might exclude their peers. Such theory, although "developed for a substantive or empirical area of sociological inquiry" (Glaser & Strauss, 1967, p. 32) will help researchers, educators, parents and practitioners to better understand young children's behavior as it refers to "specific everyday-world situations" (Merriam, 2009, p. 30).

Complications: What Causes Exclusion Isn't Clear and Simple

It would be extremely handy to discover that children have only one reason to exclude each time they do so, and then to be able to prove that reason with surety. Unfortunately, I did not find that to be the case. Instead there were a typically a variety of co-occurrant factors that seemed to lead to the perpetrator's exclusion of a peer. Only very rarely was there only one clear-cut reason for a child to leave another out. Therefore, the reasons behind exclusion are not mutually exclusive categories.

In the following example, there are multiple reasons for Peter's exclusion.

Example 4.1

((Peter is trying to enter a large group game where a number of children are pretending to be dogs.))

1 Peter: Can I be a dog, too?

((No one responds and he continues to follow behind—trying to play but unacknowledged by the players. He briefly leaves the group and then rejoins Hector and Christopher, who are still playing.))

2 Peter: Can I be a dog, too?

((When there is no response he tries again.))

3 Peter: Can I be a dog?

4 Peter: Can I be a dog?

5 Christopher: Oh, Okay.

((But even with permission to enter the play, nothing is done to include him and he continues to follow behind the other children. Peter jumps off of the bridge and pretends to swim.))

6 Peter: Are we swimming in the sea, guys?

((There is no response to his question and he continues to try to play without being actively included. A short time later he tries to direct his offers to a different child.))

7 Peter: Let's dive, superdog!

8 Liam: No!

((Peter continues to approach Liam and talk to him about the game.))

During these interactions there were several factors that influenced Peter's continued exclusion. One of the most important was the ongoing nature of this game. When Peter framed his requests, they required the children to break the play frame and stop playing the game to respond. He would make his requests not when there was a lull in the play, but at a moment when the children were particularly engaged. So this exclusion was probably caused, in large part, by the **excluders' desire to avoid interruption.** However, that was not the only factor that impacted their behavior. Peter was also **disliked by his peers[2].** Finally, his **strategies for joining the game were not particularly effective.** He made a number of direct requests ("Can I be a dog, too?"), which I found were almost always refused. In particular, **requests from low status children were likely to be refused.** Peter was quite low status as the only child to

[2] His nominations for being disliked by peers placed him above the median and only one child nominated him as someone that they liked.

suggest that he might be powerful amongst his peers and nominate him as a leader was also the only child who nominated him as a friend.

Each of these reasons for exclusion will be explored and explained in later chapters, so I merely wish to illustrate that there were at least four reasons contributing to Peter's exclusion. Peter's lack of power and the fact that he was not well liked may have made it easier to ignore his requests, which were interrupting an interesting game. Although it was difficult to choose one predominant reason for the exclusion, I have tried to use straightforward and clear examples for each exclusion reason. I highlight particular examples of exclusion to illustrate a specific cause but, in reality, multiple factors may have contributed to that particular exclusion.

In addition, some reasons for exclusion were not actually possible to substantiate. For example, to determine that children, indeed, excluded to prevent their play from changing directions, it would be necessary to interview the excluders. However, it was usually possible to be reasonably confident based on the children's behavior and context of the exclusion. In the following example, although the exact motivation for exclusion cannot be known for certain, I will speculate that Peter was excluded because he suggested a change in agendas to an ongoing game.

Example 4.2

((Peter walks up to a large cardboard box where Jude, Liam and Christopher are sitting and playing about Star Wars.))

1	Peter:	He::llo? I can solve a problem! I'm magic and Nathan is magic.
2	Christopher:	Ah. We don't [want any magi::c.

3 Peter: [I'm magic and Nathan is magic.

4 Jude: We don't need any magic.

5 Christopher: We can we can already use the force.

6 Jude: The [force around us.

7 Peter: [We

8 Peter: I can give (.) um .hh we can give Jay-. Me and Nathan can give .hh Jayda and Ida away.

9 Jude: I don' want. (.) We don't want magic. We want ourselves.

10 Peter: We wan- Me and Nathan want ourselves, too.

((They continue to talk about magic while Jude, Liam and Christopher continue to play.))

11 Peter: We can do more than magic!

12 Liam: No(h)o!

13 Peter: We're awesome people

14 Liam: No::: we don't need any magic.

15 Peter: Okay then. Bye bye.

The language used makes it obvious that Peter was suggesting a shift in agendas. The other children verbally resisted this change by referencing their current game. Therefore, it was highly likely that the children did not want the addition of magic problem solvers to their game, which was dramatically off topic considering they were in the middle of playing Star Wars.

PART III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Chapter 5: Results

Results of this study indicated that there were a variety of reasons that young children chose to exclude their peers. Several of these were supported by prior literature, but others appear to be new contributions to the field. Some exclusion was perpetrated (1) **to help the excluder gain/maintain power or control**. An entirely different type of exclusion was the behavior that occurred (2) **for social reasons.** Social reasons included the use of exclusion (2a) to *support a group identity* and (2b) to *help a friendship*. Exclusion was also sometimes simply the result of (3) **the particular context** surrounding the interaction at that time. Subtypes of exclusion based on the interaction context included situations in which (3a) *the children's school environment* led to exclusion, (3b) the exclusion occurred to *protect the children's ongoing play,* and (3c) exclusion took place simply because it had already occurred and so had *become an ongoing pattern* for the children. Exclusion was sometimes also (4) **caused by the behavior of the excludee**—either (4a) *something specific they did immediately prior to the incident* caused them to be excluded or (4b) *there was something about how they behaved, in general*, that contributed to being a target of exclusion. Finally, certain groups appeared to use exclusion far more than others in the course of their daily social interactions. Therefore, (5) **the overall social culture of that particular classroom or specific peer group may have caused exclusion to occur.** The subsequent chapters of this Results and Discussion section will attempt to better explain the complex set of

circumstances that contributed to young children's usage of exclusion in a classroom setting.

Chapter 6: Excluding to Gain Power and Control

Exclusion occurred when a child appeared to want control over some aspect of their play environment, their own agenda, or a peer's behavior. It also occurred to help children regain control when they felt powerless or to raise their own status in the peer group. Finally, exclusion seemed to occur simply as a further expression of a child's power amongst peers.

Controlling Peers and Play

Children often excluded their peers to gain control of their play or their playmates. For example, a child might try to get another to comply with their wishes by excluding them.

Example 6.1

((Asher and Walt are standing together. Walt is wearing one of the vests that contain a microphone. Asher has refused to wear one.))

1 Walt: He:::y! Then I'm <u>not</u> gonna be your friend.

2 Walt: I'm <u>only</u> gonna be your friend if you put on a n:n: and won' [be like me.

3 Asher: [Well ( ) just sta(re) for.

4 Walt: Then I'm not gonna be your frie:n-

5 Asher: I don't want to.

6 Walt: I don' ( ) 'bout that. You need to be wearing this so you can be (with) your friend.

((Walt walks away leaving Asher standing under the tree on the hill.))

7 Walt: ((talking to himself)) ‘Ca:use I <u>am</u> his friend.

((Many minutes later, after a long trip to the bathroom, Walt is singing while he pushes himself around the track on a scooter. Asher is following him on the scooter, but neither of them talk. Asher turns his scooter around so they are going in opposite directions. When they approach each other, Asher rams his scooter into Walt’s.))

8 Asher: Eeee!

9 Asher: Hey Walt!

((Walt doesn’t say anything but keeps singing. He picks his scooter up and keeps on scooting. Asher picks his up as well and follows him. After another minute Walt goes into the shed to put his scooter back. Asher follows to do the same.))

10 Asher: (Walt) dyou want t <u>play</u> t’gether?

((Walt continues to sing and walks away. Asher follows him.))

11 Asher: ( ) play together?

12 Asher: ( ) play that game?

13 Asher: Walt?

Interestingly, during the entire course of the study Walt never succeeded in getting Asher to wear a vest.

When children used exclusion to control play and peers, they frequently threatened to exclude or threatened to leave the play themselves. Rather than outright exclusion, these threats may have been an attempt to preserve the situation that they wanted to control.

Example 6.2

((In the presence of a teacher, Nathan and Chloe are talking about what they will play while sitting in a large cardboard box.))

1 Nathan: I DON'T WANT TAH PLAY THAT GAME.

2 Chloe: °What games can we play (.) then?°

3 Nathan: I wanna play Pokemo::n. You can be (Kolya)?

4 Chloe: °I don't wanna play Pokema::n.°

5 Nathan: Then I'm never going to play with you.

6 Chloe: That's not a good thing to say. °That's mean you know.°

7 Nathan: You s:::::ay we can't play Pokeman.

8 Chloe: I don't. I'm not.

9 Nathan: I'm never going to [play.

10 Chloe: [Well. It's not you::r hh .hh deci- .hh It's not (.)your. It's not that (.) you don't get to decide everything that (we play). We have to decide together.

The previous examples were of a child who desired control of a very specific thing (a vest worn, a particular game played), but at other times children seemed to just want to be in control, in general. Joel was one child who often tried to control his playmates and his games.

Example 6.3

((Douglas and Joel are in the play house. Keenan approaches to join them in the house.))

1 Joel: No, Douglas, only one person allowed. Only one person allowed!

((Douglas stays in the house and Keenan joins them there are well.))

As Joel did not follow through on this in any way, he did not seem particularly invested in actually excluding Douglas. This led me to guess that Joel was merely trying to assert his status as the group leader. Although Keenan was the newcomer, it was Douglas whom Joel tried to get out of the house. Douglas was of lower status and was more volatile than Keenan, who was an affable, socially competent child.

In the above examples, the children demonstrated that they clearly wanted to be in control, whether of their friend's clothing, the type of game played or who could be present. These children used exclusion as a tool to try to gain control and mastery over their play environment or of other children.

Controlling One's Own Environment

Similarly, children excluded in order to control their own fate. This type of exclusion was most evident when the perpetrator was unwilling to compromise their play ideas or alter what they were doing to accommodate another person, even if it resulted in the dissolution of their play or the desertion of their playmates. Although this sometimes resulted in the excluder's control over what others did, their main focus was making decisions for themselves.

Example 6.4[3]

((Ida stands in front of the puppet theater and starts to introduce a puppet show. Chloe is behind the theater stand with a puppet.))

[3] A continuation of Example 8.10

1 Chloe: It’s my turn, Ida. I said it is my turn. I want to do it by myself.

2 Ida: But there’s two people who do it.

((Ida and Jayda pick up and start to play with puppets.))

3 Chloe: No. (.) I want to do it by myself.

((Ida and Jayda leave the puppet show area. Chloe is left on her own.))

4 Chloe: Hello. I’m Hilda the hippo. Would you like to learn some very fun facts about reading?

It was clear that Chloe wanted to do the show in a particular way, regardless of whether her peers were present. In the following example, James threatened to exclude himself from play when his ideas were limited by another child, clearly demonstrating a focus on his own agenda.

Example 6.5

((James, Effie and Leisel are pretending to bake in the house.))

1 Effie: Don't put sprinkles on it!

((James throws down the bottle he was holding.))

2 James: That means I'm not going to play with anyone. .hh I'm just going to play by myself.

((James stands in the house for a minute. Neither Effie nor Leisel address him again. He then walks over to the climber and does not return to the game.))

In one of the most intense incidents that I witnessed during my data collection, Eden had her own, very strong, agenda and tried to exclude Leisel to follow through with it.

Example 6.6

((Leisel, Zeke and Effie are on the tire swing when Eden approaches with an assistant teacher, Serena.))

1 Eden: Serena's gonna push us! Serena's gonna push AA:::::H! Hah hah! ((in a sing song voice)) Serena (can you) please get me a push me! Serena. Please. Can you push us super fast. She's gon' really fast! Hold on tight! HOLD (.) ON TIGHT (AAAH YOU CAN)!

2 Serena: Okay, we're in the shade.

3 Eden: No, this way. This way, this way, this way. [That way!

4 Serena: [(Which) way?

5 Eden: This way.

6 Serena: [In a circle?

7 Leisel: [Can you (.) can you go medium?

8 Eden: No, [fast fir:st!

9 Serena: [Okay.

10 Eden: Like you di-. Like she did. Kay?

11 Serena: ( )

12 Eden: Then get off, please, Leisel.

13 Zachary: Fast, fast fas [fast.

14 Eden: [fast fast.

15 Eden: Get off if you don't wanna (go) fast! We'll tell you (when we're done). (1) Okay? (.) Alright? (1) Please, Leisel!

16 Leisel: You are not making choices (for me); I make choices for myself!

17 Serena: Ri::ght.

18 Eden: Well, I'm stopping the swing (.) like this.

19 Eden: Well, you ( ). I am.

20 Eden: It's gonna get fast.

21 Zeke: Super super

22 Effie: Then I wanna get off.

((Effie gets off the swing and leaves the area.))

23 Eden: (Some gonna super here) wanna go off?

24 Zeke: Yah.

((Zeke gets off and leaves the area.))

25 Leisel: I'm not!

26 Eden: Then I'm not, then I'm gonna still do it!

27 Serena: Okay, so I'm pushing.

28 Eden: NOPE!

29 Serena: No? Okay.

30 Eden: When she ((points to Leisel)) gets off you're gonna push. That's my choice for her!

31 Leisel: No, It's my choice to make the choices of me. [It's your choice to make the choices of you.

32 Eden: [Well.

33 Eden: Well. I can do choices of n'other people. But. But (.) Effie listens to me, Mikayla listen t'me, [Annie listens to me.

34 Leisel: [I do not.

35 Eden: ((to Serena)) No pushing!

((Eden grabs Leisel's upper arm and squeezes is very tightly.))

36 Leisel: Stop. You're squeezing me!

37 Eden: I'm doing that because (.) you're not letting me go fast. Get off if I made the choice, and I can do super duper fast pushing!

((Eden gets of the swing.))

38 Eden: Here I GO! ((She gives the swing a large arcing push.)) I'm pushing right now! Now I'm going that fast. What you don't want me g-.

((Eden continues to push Leisel as high as she can. Leisel swings around in large, arcing circles. She holds on tightly and has a very serious face.))

Leisel: I'm not. ( ) this (.) fast.

39 Eden: There!

40 Eden: And now we're not gonna stop you. You're gon' turning super duper.

41 Leisel: ( ) stop.

42 Eden: Well, I'm gonna leave you like that and Serena, I'm gonna tell her.

((Eventually Serena moves to slow it down, but Eden tries to stop her.))

43 Eden: Nope! Nope! No.

44 Eden: I wanna GO FAST!

45 Serena: Okay! (.) Okay.

46 Eden: Leisel, then get off please. PLEASE!

47 Leisel: Okay! But then I am going to go (.) my speed. And [you

48 Eden: [When I call your name! (1) Okay?

49 Leisel: But you do not make the choices of me!

50 Eden: Well, I want to. And when I call you (the) name, it's your turn, okay?

51 Leisel: And we're gonna go medium.

52 Eden: Yeah? When I call you.

((Leisel gets off the swing and leaves. She sits on the ground by the back wall with her arms crossed.))

In this example, Eden was willing not only to exclude, but to threaten and pinch so that she could be in control as well. Although this was a more extreme example than the others, the reason behind the exclusion was the same: to be in control of her own actions and to decide, for herself, what she would do.

Gaining Power and Status

When a child was trying to feel powerful or raise his/her status, a similar type of

exclusion might occur.

Example 6.7

((Keenan crawls under the platform that is adjacent to the area where Susan and Marianne are playing.))

1 Marianne: HEY! HEY! Hey, hey, hey! Get out o'there!

2 Keenan: Why::?

3 Marianne: Cause (.) Cause I might scare you away!

4 Marianne: I might scare you. Grr:::!

5 Keenan: Grr::!

6 Susan: Are you scaring the girls away?

7 Marianne: No, the boys.

8 Susan: Grr:

7 Marianne: Grr::

((Keenan crawls out from under the platform and walks away.))

Marianne was the smallest child in the class (over a foot shorter than Gabrielle, the tallest!) and many of the children treated her as if she *was* younger. She frequently growled or yelled, which may have been in compensation for her "baby-like" status. In this example, her "scary" exclusion of Keenan may have been an attempt to demonstrate her power.

In the following example, Effie seems to be using exclusion to increase her status.

Example 6.8

((Effie tells Zara and Elsie about the flower she is planting (an imaginary seed in the sand), and they follow her to the sand area where she has been digging.))

1 Effie: I want somebody to guard this for me ( ).

2 Elsie: I won't.

3 Effie: I need somebody to.

4 Zara: I will.

5 Effie: Ok.

6 Zara: What do you need?

7 Effie: I just need (.) someone to guard this and I need somebody to help me plant.

8 Zara: Okay. I wanna guard this and plant with you.

9 Elsie: Can I help you, [too?

10 Effie: [Yeah.

11 Zara: Okay.

12 Effie: Only one person can.

13 Zara: Whose that gonna be?

14 Effie: Elsie.

15 Zara: Why not me::? You always- always don't choose me. But I'm getting big teeth!

((Effie and Elsie dig in the sand while Zara sits a few feet away, whimpering and sniffing. She eventually walks over and stands near where Effie and Elsie are working.))

16 Effie: Well, we're only gonna play with you ( ).

17 Zara: I wanna play with my own self. And never be your friend again.

I think you guys are not so old as me 'cause I'm (an older) five. 'Cause I'm even getting my big teeth.

Here Effie had two children vying to assist her and she was able to choose one, a powerful feeling for a young child. Establishing an extraneous rule, as Effie did, was a common technique for excluding peers. The above examples show that both Effie and Marianne sought power and used exclusion to gain it.

Choosing a Powerful Playmate

Many children seemed to prefer powerful playmates. This sometimes resulted in the exclusion of a less powerful peer.

Example 6.9[4]

((Lauren is inside the play house with Gabrielle while Blaine stands outside it blowing bubbles.))

1 Blaine: Lauren!

2 Blaine: Lauren. Lauren, wah, Lauren watch!

3 Blaine: Lauren watch!

4 Gabrielle: Why does she have to watch every time?

((Lily walks up to Blaine.))

5 Lily: Blaine, do you want to go swing on the swing with me?

[4] This incident is continued in Example 7.15.

((Blaine does not respond.))

6 Lily: Blaine, want to go swing on the swing with me?

7 Blaine: Look Lauren! Oh!

8 Lily: Can you go- you want to swing on the swing with me?

9 Lily: Want to go swing on the swing with me?

10 Blaine: No::.

11 Lily: (°wan' you to°)

12 Lily: Please? (°I wan' you to°)

13 Blaine: I want to blow bubbles. Maybe I can watch you?

Throughout this observation Blaine and Gabrielle had been vying for Lauren's attention. Although Blaine and Lily often played together, Lauren was a far more powerful child in this peer group. Similar behavior occurred when a child appeared to "trade up" to a higher status playmate. Although the child may have been engaged in successful play with one group of peers, when there was an opportunity to play with a more powerful child, they sometimes excluded their old group in order to play with a higher status peer.

Example 6.10

((Mikayla and Zeke are on the tire swing but begin talking about pushing the swing together. They get off and each stand on a side of the swing, pushing it back and forth between them. They are laughing and talking as they do so. Leisel approaches them.))

1 Leisel: Annie? (.) I mean Mikayla?

2 Mikayla: What?

3 Leisel: Want to play with us?

4 Mikayla: Um, yeah.

((Mikayla follows Leisel to the back house, leaving Zeke to push the tire swing alone.))

However, one confounding factor indicated that these results could be inaccurate. There was a significant overlap between which peers a child named as *powerful* and those they *liked* (76% of children named at least one child as someone they liked *and* someone who was powerful). This inhibited my ability to determine whether a child excluded to play with a child because they were more powerful or because they considered them a friend. Below, as Chloe is asked to name classroom leaders, she tries to articulate why this overlap occurred.

Example 6.11

1 Chloe: So:: mostly those three are the ones that I take .hh that me the whole .hh that I know.

2 Chloe: Bu:t since I don't play with mostly anybody else, know very many more leaders that I know.

Excluding After Being an Excludee

One unexpected finding was that children frequently excluded a peer shortly after having been excluded themselves. This may have been a way for the children to regain control, having lost it when they were excluded.

Example 6.12

((Gary jumps off the playscape but is watching Walt and Asher play.))

1 Walt: We're jumping over these plants silly!

2 Gary: [Yeah!

3 Asher: [Oh?

4 Gary: Can I play with you?

5 Asher: Yeah!

6 Walt: NO? NO!

7 Gary: Hey! That's not fair!

8 Walt: We just wanna be, we wanna have some time together (1) right now we ju- ( ) have any time together

9 Gary: Ple:::::ase!

10 Walt: (You might want to) play with James. He's one of your friends.

((Gary goes over to where James is standing around a big table on the patio. He is standing next to Marissa but there are a number of other children there as well.))

11 Gary: James! Let's play together, right?

12 James: Yeah.

13 Gary: Yeah.

((The children talk about a dead butterfly that is on the table.))

14 James: Come on let's go. ((It's not clear to whom this is directed.))

15 Gary: Yeah. Let's go.

16 Gary: Come on let's go.

17 James: Hey Marissa. Come on we're going.

18 Gary: Come on we're going.

19 Gary: Come on let's go have some time to ourselves. Right?

((James does not respond but stays at the table.))

20 James: Okay. Come on Marissa.

21 Gary: Okay, (that means it's) just me and you, right James?

22 James: Well (.) (but) (.) I'm gonna go with Marissa.

In this incident it was particularly clear that Gary was excluding after having been excluded himself as he echoed the language used to exclude him just one minute earlier. Walt had told him "we wanna have some time together" and later Gary told James "let's go have some time to ourselves."

Similarly, Maggie echoed the language used to exclude her when she went on to exclude another child.

Example 6.13

((Maggie and Gabrielle approach Lily and Blaine who are between the house and the tower.

1 Maggie: Neigh! Neigh. Neigh!

((Maggie whacks Lily on the head with the flat of her hand. Lily does not respond.))

2 Maggie: ((neighs repeatedly))

3 Blaine: (We're) not playin?

4 Gabrielle: Well ah then I won't go to gymnastic (with) you.

5 Maggie: Blaine, you really hurt my feelings.

6 Gabrielle: Yeah. Me too.

((Maggie leaves and wanders around before going to the pretend gas station.))

7 Gavin: ((Roars at Maggie to initiate play.))

8 Maggie: We’re not playing the game!

Maggie was told “we’re not playing” and then one minute later told Gavin “we’re not playing the game.” Although she was alone, she used the plural, just as Lily did.

When a child succeeded in entering a group after someone had tried to exclude them, they frequently exhibited a similar form of reactionary exclusion. Having been admitted to the play, they then excluded the next child who tried to enter the group.

Example 6.14

((Gabrielle approaches Susan, Blaine and Lauren, who are under a low platform of the playscape.))

1 Gabrielle: Can I play with y’all?

((No one responds to her.))

2 Gabrielle: Can I play with y’all?

3 Blaine: No:.

4 Lauren: No.

5 Susan: I can’ get under ‘cause there’s no [room.

6 Blaine: [‘s no room.

7 Lauren: There’s no roo::m!

8 Gabrielle: Guys, that’s not nice!

9 Blaine: Well yes, you can but we're sneakin’ on the boys.

10 Gabrielle: °Okay.°

11 Lauren: We're spying.

((The children scoot closer together to make room for Gabrielle, who crawls in. They talk about hunting the boys. One minute later Elizabeth tries to get in the cramped area as well. Lauren and Susan try to move around to make space for her.))

12 Gabrielle: °They can see you.°

13 Blaine: They can see you.

14 Gabrielle: Get out!

This exclusion may have helped Gabrielle to feel powerful or to regain a sense of control after being rebuffed by her friends. However, this exclusion may have *also* been caused, in part, by Gabrielle's desire to be a part of the *in group*[5]. In the course of my study, someone excluded immediately after having been excluded themselves on 12 different occasions.

Protection, Punishment and Self-Defense

In a few incidents, it appeared that children were excluding their peers either to protect themselves from harm or for revenge.

Example 6.15

((Mikayla, Leisel and Annie are on the tire swing. Emma is pushing them.))

1 Emma: Ready, set, go. RU:::N!

((Emma falls down as she is trying to run and spin them in circles.))

2 Emma: WHOA! I tripped!

[5] I will discuss excluding to be part of the in-group more thoroughly in Chapter 7 in the section on exclusion as a part of peer group interactions.

((The children on the swing laugh.))

3 Emma: Wait guys. Guys!

4 Emma: Let me stand up! Wait Leisel! Laughing is not nice. Laughing is not nice, guys.

5 Emma: Laughing is not nice if you wanna be no- nice .hh to me .hh and laugh at me I'm .hh not [gonna play.

((Leisel, Annie and Mikayla get off the tire swing.))

6 Leisel: [I didn't laugh at you.

((Annie is stumbling about in the background.))

7 Annie: (Tripping!)

8 Emma: 'Kay. Then Leisel. Me and Mikayla might hh .hh play together if you laugh at me again.

((Annie continues to trip and stagger around. She bumps into Emma.))

9 Annie: (Whaw!)

10 Emma: And Annie pushed me! NOW it's really (bad)! Come on Mikayla. We might wanna

((Emma pauses, then walks away from the swing. Mikayla follows her. Annie and Leisel begin to follow as well.))

11 Emma: Annie, you pushed me. Mik- .hh uh .hh umm: Leisel, you laughed at me. And Annie, you laughed at me. And me and Mikayla would like to have some time together .hh since you guys .hh did something .hh things mean to me.

Example 6.16

((Walt approaches the house where Effie and Emma are playing. He stands on the platform by the house.))

1 Walt: LITTLE PIGS, LITTLE PIGS, let me come in!

((His arms are raised with fingers curved.))

2 Walt: Little pigs, little pigs, let me come in!

3 Effie: No! We're (.) this is a children's hospital!

4 Walt: I AM A BIG BAD WOLF!

5 Effie: Hum!

6 Walt: I even have (.) little pig characters and a big bad wolf character that will scare you guys away!

7 Effie: I don't like that.

((Effie and Emma step out of the house and look in the other direction. Walt eventually gets down and walks away.))

In both of these examples, the children seem to be protecting themselves. It is possible that the following example was inspired more by revenge than self-protection.

Example 6.17

1 Ida: ((pointing at Chloe)) Yeah! We're not playing with you today!

((Ida starts to run away with Jayda accompanying her. Chloe follows them. Ida stops and watches as Jayda and Chloe continue to run.))

2 Ida: She just wants to be hap- She just wants to be (with) Jayda. She sh- sh- (.) really likes me. (1) But she doesn-

((Chloe and Jayda join a group of children in the sand. Ida gets a wheelbarrow and wheels it over to the group.))

3 Ida: WHO WANTS TO GET IN THE RIDE? °But only not Chloe can't.°

((Chloe remains on the spiral. Jayda gets in the wheelbarrow, but soon gets back out and returns to Chloe.))

Although revenge or intent to harm seem likely motives for this exclusion, it is also possible that Ida was trying to protect herself from emotional harm or that she was simply trying to get attention from Jayda.

Exclusion Whims

Excluding to be powerful or to raise one's status requires determination and deep feelings, but exclusion sometimes occurred in the absence of strong opinions. Occasionally the excluder did not seem to care whether the entering child actually joined the play. They were refusing entry simply because they could. Whether the child was excluded or not was irrelevant, but the feeling of power mattered. In the following example, Lauren had been alternating between play with Blaine and Gabrielle, but had not really settled into a game with either.

Example 6.18

1 Gabrielle: Hey Lauren, you wanna play °with me°?

2 Lauren: No.

((One minute passes during which Marianne, Blaine and Lauren try to find enough shovels for everyone to use.))

3 Gabrielle: Lauren, you wanna play with me?

4 Blaine: She’s na playing with me.

5 Gabrielle: But I need that bear.

6 Blaine: Okay.

7 Gabrielle: [Fine.

8 Blaine: [We don't need this, we just need shovels.

9 Gabrielle: Do you wanna play with me or not, Lauren?

10 Lauren: Yes.

Lauren first excluded Gabrielle and then changed her mind one minute later. It was not clear that Lauren actually wanted to play with Gabrielle, but it was also not clear that she preferred to be with Marianne and Blaine. A few weeks prior to this incident, she had behaved similarly with her sister, Elizabeth.

Example 6.19

((Elizabeth approaches the play house where Gabrielle and Lauren are cleaning up sand toys.))

1 Elizabeth: Hey Lauren, can you be my friend?

2 Lauren: °After I’m done.°

((Lauren finishes cleaning.))

3 Elizabeth: Lauren, you done?

((Lauren moves away from Elizabeth, picks up a bucket and then puts it down in another spot. Elizabeth sits down by the bucket, but then Lauren walks away.))

4 Elizabeth: Lauren!

((Lauren begins to run and Elizabeth runs after her. Their other sister (Susan), and Gabrielle join in and begin running after Lauren as well. Lauren climbs onto the climbing structure and the others follow. She gets back down and the others, again, follow her. After another minute of running away and following, Lauren takes Susan's hand and begins walking with her. Elizabeth immediately tries to hold Lauren's other hand. At first, Lauren pulls away, but after a few attempts, she lets Elizabeth hold her hand. Lauren then begins to lead Susan and Elizabeth around the yard, now running away from Gabrielle, Marianne and Blaine.))

5 Lauren: We're playing all by ourselves.

6 Gabrielle: Can I play?

7 Lauren: °We're playing all by ourselves, Gabrielle.°

8 Gabrielle: Can I play, guys?

9 Lauren: °We're playing all by ourselves, Gabrielle.°

Lauren's changing alliances suggested that she did not actually care with whom she played. She did not appear to be excluding because she wanted to follow a particular agenda, to control her play or to protect anything. She seemed to simply be using her social power to exclude.

Discussion

All human beings need power and control in the course of their lives (Deci & Ryan, 2000; Prilleltensky, Nelson & Peirson, 2001). Those who are disempowered tend to lack confidence (Brinol, Petty, Valle, Rucker, & Becerra, 2007), experience anxiety (Chorpita & Barlow, 1998; Fiske, Morling & Stevens, 1996), feel increased stress and

engage in more risk-taking behaviors (Jordan, Sivanathan & Gallinsky, 2011). Because children are largely powerless in the larger adult world (Prilleltensky, et al.), peers and play could be common outlets for experiencing (and experimenting with) power for young children. Therefore, power and control are likely to be central themes in young children's peer interactions.

In addition, feelings of power and control are important for psychological health. According to *self-determination theory* (Deci & Ryan, 2000), for people to be psychologically healthy, certain psychological needs must be met: autonomy, competence and connectedness with other people. In other words, people must be able to make their own choices, experience mastery and be in relationships with others (Deci & Ryan). Those who achieve success in meeting these needs appear to be psychologically healthy and "yield considerable adaptive advantage at the level of individual and group selection" (Deci & Ryan, p. 230). Although young children are certainly not fighting for survival and evolutionary success on the playground, evolutionary needs frequently carry over into everyday behavior (Cosmides & Tooby, 1987). For a young child, the integration of these three goals (autonomy, competence and connectedness) is visible in successful interaction and play with peers. In play, one is connected to others and integrated into a group and when a child determines the direction of their play (autonomy), they can also direct the play to areas of comfort or expertise (competence). Therefore, having control over play is vital to young children (Corsaro, 1985) and exclusion is one way that they can accomplish this. However, some children seem more invested in controlling play than others and not all children chose peer exclusion to do so.

Therefore, there are individual differences both in children's need for power and in whether they choose to use exclusion for that purpose.

Joel was one child who sought control in play frequently. He also received the highest number of nominations as a "powerful" peer in his classroom. Many of his statements were dictatorial and he commonly tried to show other children how to do things (Examples 6.3, 7.2). Although all young children use this type of direct language, Joel's usage of it was far more frequent than most children's. In fact, when looking at his individual utterances there was a distinct difference in how he spoke. Thirty five percent of Joel's individual utterances contained orders or commands such as "Now close it! Close it!" "Douglas, throw it back," or "We don't need the beads, we're too busy." Other children used a much lower percentage of orders and commands when talking to their peers. In fact, only 10% of Keenan's utterances and 18% of Douglas' were said in commanding language. Therefore, it may be that Joel sought control of his peers with greater frequency than other children. He was not, however, one of the most frequent excluders in the study. He simply used many techniques to control his peers, of which exclusion was one. "When classroom leaders have the opportunity to make choices that can impact others, questions of inclusion and exclusion arise" (Lee & Recchia, 2008, p. 5).

Lauren was similarly powerful amongst her peers, although according to peer nominations, she was only slightly above the median[6]. But although Joel seemed deeply

[6] I initially had difficulty determining which of the triplets was most powerful and suspect that the children did so as well. Although almost every child was able to distinguish the three girls from each other when shown photographs during the sociometrics, it is possible that, when they were all together, there was some

invested in maintaining control, Lauren appeared to use her power to exclude simply because she had it. Perhaps as a result, she excluded quite frequently (17 times over the course of the study). This may have been, in part, because she did not seem particularly invested in being friends with most of the children in her class. In fact, when she was interviewed, she was the only child who did not give a serious answer about her friends. When I asked whom she most liked to play with, without hesitation she told me that she liked to play with Marianne. But when I asked about other children she liked to be with, she looked around and did not answer. When I asked her a third time, she began to giggle and quickly stabbed at Gavin and Maggie's pictures. As she rarely chose to play with Gavin and Maggie, I was not sure that these were genuine answers. Although she may not have cared whether a particular peer played, she was certainly willing to give an answer when asked. She excluded on a whim, simply because she was powerful enough to decide such things amongst her peers.

During my observations, it became clear that a few of the children seemed to have a greater need for control and autonomy than others and so tended to exclude very frequently. For example, Gabrielle excluded a total of 22 times during our observations, making her the most frequent excluder in our study. She excluded, in part, because she was focused on maintaining a friendship with "the triplets" (Lauren, Elizabeth and Susan), who were a powerful force in their classroom. But her exclusion seemed to go beyond that. I noticed that she very commonly did or said things that made her feel

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confusion during fast moving play or that it was difficult to remember which triplet was responsible for specific behaviors days after they had occurred. Because the threesome carried so much weight as a group, their classmates may have spread powerful nominations between the three.

important, powerful or grown-up. Almost every morning, her first activity upon entering the yard was to climb to the highest point in the climber and sit, looking down on everything else. “This reversal of physical perspective—the children looking down on rather than up to adults—empowers kids” (Corsaro, 2003, p. 47). When another child would try to climb up, she often discouraged them and suggested that they would not be able to accomplish this. “I wouldn’t do that if I were you, even if you like the height” or “You have the wrong shoes.” She also frequently referenced her abilities as they related to age or size: “When I was two I could make a bubble bigger than that.” In particular, she treated Marianne as if she were far younger, even using a different (high pitched, gentle) voice to speak to her: “You’re super small,” “You don’t have to size it as much” (referring to a paper birthday crown that fit Marianne’s head).

Her teacher informed me that Gabrielle was the youngest child in her family and had a number of older siblings whom, it seemed, did not treat her particularly well. In the way she spoke to her peers, I often heard what may have been the voices of these older siblings. For example, she frequently asked her peers, “What is wrong with you?” when they made a small mistake or did not do what she wanted them to (Example 9.13). It seemed to me that Gabrielle had a need for power and control that went beyond that of her peers and may have resulted from her treatment at home. Those who feel powerless may use coercive force, try to control others more, and exhibit more competitiveness when they have an opportunity (Bugental & Lewis, 1999; Bugental & Martorell, 1999). This use of coercive power would, in turn, give them a temporary feeling of increased control (Bugental & Lewis; Bugental & Martorell). As Gabrielle’s need for power

seemed to be more extreme than the majority of the children's, this may have contributed to her frequent usage of exclusion. Therefore, exclusion to control or gain power may be normative and a sign of healthy development, but those who use exclusion frequently for power may be demonstrating an underlying unmet need.

This establishment of control and power through exclusion may also be important for children who have, themselves, just been excluded. To be excluded by one's peers results in a diminished sense of control and self-esteem (Stanley & Arora, 1998; Zadro, 2005). To compensate for this and to feel increased confidence or self-worth (Bugental & Lewis, 1999; Bugental & Martorell, 1999), the recently excluded child may exclude the next potential newcomer they encounter. Exclusion to regain control may be the result of defensive response similar to those incidents of exclusion originating in an attempt at self-protection (Example 6.15). As discussed in the literature review (Chapter 2), when a person's safety is threatened, they may engage in *defensive ostracism* to ensure their own safety and survival (Williams & Zadro, 2001). Arnold, et al. (1999) and Barner-Berry (1986) found that preschoolers will exclude or reject a peer who has been physically or verbally aggressive towards them. As my data was collected in a particularly safe environment where adults were highly attuned to the children's behavior, incidents of defensive ostracism were extremely limited and primarily directed at *psychological*, rather than physical, safety. In sum, it is important for young children to feel powerful and to be able to control at least some aspects of their lives. Peer interactions are a common outlet for children's powerful behaviors and the nature of exclusion makes it particularly likely to be used for reasons related to power and control.

Chapter 7: Exclusion to Benefit One's Relationships

Children's social goals strongly impacted exclusion and inclusion in the classrooms. Both the excluder's friendships and membership in their peer group were important causes of exclusion.

Exclusion as a Part of Peer Group Interactions

Children sometimes excluded in an attempt to protect a peer group and maintain its boundaries. At other times, children used exclusion to establish the boundaries of a newly formed peer group. They also tried to join a peer group using exclusion. Finally, children used exclusion to enhance their reputation within their peer group

Maintaining in-group boundaries. Many peer groups have consistent membership and group members interact with each other on a daily basis (Adler & Adler, 1995). In my study, when a group of children were playing together (and so part of the same *in-group*) they often did not seem to want outsiders (members of the *out-group*) to join them during play. In particular, play groups with high numbers of mutually nominated friends seemed likely to prefer playing on their own. This lack of group membership seemed to be a common reason for exclusion. In the following example, a group of three mutually nominated friends (Keenan, Joel and Douglas) were playing together when Maggie tried to join.

Example 7.1

((Douglas is pretending to be a sleeping cheetah and is laying on a playscape platform with his eyes closed.))

1 Maggie: AUH! Two jaguars. One boy, one girl.

((Maggie lies down next to him, also closing her eyes. She pretends to snore. Douglas does not acknowledge her entry.))

2 Maggie: Rar:

((Douglas begins to growl at Maggie. He stands up and climbs down from the climbing structure. He begins to run. Maggie follows him.))

3 Maggie: Douglas, I (want to) play with you!

4 Maggie: Douglas, ( ) play with you.

((Douglas looks at her and then turns around and continues to run. Maggie continues to follow Douglas. Douglas runs up to the top of a small hill where Joel and Keenan are standing. Joel sticks his arms up, hands extended and fingers in claw shapes. He points them at Maggie and makes a fierce face.))

5 Joel: Roaarh!

((Douglas begins to run again and Maggie follows him.))

6 Maggie: Douglas! Douglas!

((This continues for some time with Douglas and Joel running away whenever Maggie approaches them.))

Maggie was clearly trying to join an ongoing game. However she was trying to join a group of three friends who played together, without other peers, every day. In the following example, Joel appeared to be trying to maintain the boundaries of this same in-group.

Example 7.2

1 Jacob: Hey Joel! When it's my turn on the wagon, can you pull me and Douglas

and Keenan?

2 Joel: No. We're not doing that.

3 Jacob: ( ) Keenan and Douglas push?

4 Joel: No.

5 Jacob: °You and Keenan and Douglas can (push)?°

6 Jacob: OKAY. You ( ) push.

7 Joel: NO! I'M (.) WE'LL NOT.

Here Joel may have considered Jacob an unwanted interloper to his group. Jacob was a skilled player, and he and Joel named each other as friends during the sociometrics, However, Jacob was not a part of the threesome who played together regularly and so Joel may have been trying to hold his in-group together.

Example 7.3

((Aaron and Wilson are on the tire swing. Gavin tries to get on as well.))

1 Gavin: ((to assistant teacher)) Will you push me?

((Aaron and Wilson do not make space for him.))

2 Gavin: Okay, I'm not gonna get on with them. (1) That's (decided).

3 Gavin: I'm ( ) get on ( ).

((The teacher helps Gavin get on the tire swing.)

4 Aaron: You wanna go ( )?

5 Wilson: Okay.

((Wilson and Aaron both get off the swing as soon as Gavin gets on.))

In each of these incidents, a self-defined group of friends was playing together when an outsider tried to enter the game. In the following example, Ida tried to explain this to Jayda.

Example 7.4

((Jayda was playing with Chloe, leading Ida to sit quietly in a corner by herself. Jayda left her game to engage Ida in play. As they sat down together, they began to discus Chloe.))

1 Ida Spy let's spy on Chloe.

2 Ida: Oh! Ov- over here. This is-

3 Jayda: Let's get to her and pretend that we're, that we are friends with her.

4 Ida: No, w- we can't. (1) Because she's not our friends.

Ida explained that they shouldn't involve Chloe (by pretending that they were friends with her) because she was not their friend. Although this was a rather circular explanation, I believe that Ida was trying to articulate that she did not want Chloe to be part of their group, even if all they were doing was *pretending* to like her.

One commonly used marker of in-group membership was gender. Children would often exclude anyone trying to play who was of the other gender, stating that the game was only for members of their own in-group (e.g., girls).

Example 7.5

((Wilson goes under the slide where Marianne is playing with some other children.))

1 Marianne: This is not for bo::ys!

2 Wilson: <u>What?</u>

3 Marianne: (I said) this is not for bo:ys.

4 Wilson: If you (1) say that one more time I'm gonna tell!

5 Marianne: (It's a girl's thing.)

6 Wilson: Then::, now (1) I am TELLING!

((Wilson walks to the shed and comes out with a scooter.))

Example 7.6

((Wilson and Jacob are sitting in a cardboard box. A large group of girls is in another box nearby.))

1 Jacob: No! Will, close that or the girls will get in! ((indicating the top flap of the box))

2 Jacob: Wilson, quick! Now'd the girls will get in.

Example 7.7

((Hector is in the sand area, near the tower playing with a group of boys.))

1 Hector: I wan- I'm (.) when it's when it's my real birthday all of the boys in my class are gonna come over to my house and only one girl, no, only two girls will be there. You know which ones? My mom and my cat.

In each of the previous examples, a group of same-gender peers was playing together and explained that their activity was only for players of the same gender, thus highlighting in-group boundaries.

Joining the in-group. A child may try to exclude outsiders in order to, themselves, be recognized as a member of an established in-group. This behavior was most recognizable in Lily and Maggie. Although the in-group used and talked about

exclusion in a limited fashion, Lily and Maggie dramatically extended the exclusionary theme.

Example 7.8

((Elizabeth, Susan, Lauren and Gabrielle are sitting under the playscape pretending to cook with sand. Maggie and Lily sit nearby, also cooking. Jacob and Gavin approach the group to play.))

1	Jacob:	Yum, yum, yum, yum, yum.
2	Gabrielle:	NO. (1) We're makin' food for girls.
3	Jacob:	Oh man!
4	Gabrielle:	(ha ha ha)
5	Lily:	They're funny boys, aren't they?
6	Lily:	FOR GIRLS!
7	Gabrielle:	We're making it for girls.
8	Lily:	We don't want y'all to wait there.

((Jacob and Gavin move away and then come back into the same play area.))

9	Maggie:	Get out!
10	Gavin:	I need this for a (rock).
11	Lily:	Get out! Hide! Run, hide Maggie!

((A few minutes later the theme is repeated.))

12	Maggie:	Guys. They're coming after (.) us. They almost got me.
13	Lily:	AAAH! They're gonna shoot us! They're gonna shoot us.

((She runs away and pulls Maggie with her.))

14 Lily: Come on! Run! Ahhh!

15 Lily: Run Maggie!

((Maggie begins to play with Gavin. Lily runs on the track and returns to the group who is playing in the sand.))

16 Lily: I don't know how to (tell you) but (.) he ((Gavin)) and Maggie are friends now.

17 Lily: And they're right next to each other!

((Gavin and Maggie swing on the tire swing for a while. A teacher is present and pushing them.))

18 Maggie: I wanna get off the swing and play with my friends.

((Maggie gets off and joins Gabrielle, Susan, Blaine, Marianne, Lily, Lauren and Elizabeth.))

It appeared that Lily and Maggie were trying to integrate themselves into the in-group with Gabrielle, Elizabeth, Lauren and Susan. Gabrielle had originally suggested the exclusion by stating that "we're making food for girls." This theme was adopted by Lily and Maggie who continued the drama of exclusion long after the others had lost interest in the exclusion and focused on their own play. To prove their own status as members of the in-group, Lily and Maggie imitated the others' interests (excluding those boys) by vehemently adopting their theme, which emphasized Jacob and Gavin's out-group status. Thus, exclusion can be a means by which children try to integrate themselves into an in-group.

Consolidating an in-group. By excluding an outsider, children often took the final steps of making their play group an in-group. When children had begun playing together and were successfully engaged, it seemed like they sometimes excluded to confirm the existence of their in-group and to mark its boundaries. In such cases, gender was often utilized as a defining feature of group membership. In the following example, Blaine had tried to play with Lauren and to prevent Lauren from playing with Gabrielle. Blaine and Gabrielle competed unsuccessfully for Lauren's attention over a period of ten minutes. Eventually Blaine led Lauren around the yard to get away from the others, but as Gabrielle, Elizabeth and Susan, followed them, Blaine eventually gave up and sat down with the whole group.

Example 7.9

((Blaine and Lauren sit down in the sand under the tower and Susan, Elizabeth and Gabrielle sit down with them. Jacob and Wilson are nearby watching the group.))

1 Lauren: How about under there?

2 Marianne: Yeah!

3 Blaine: Yea::h.

4 Jacob: We were making this sand castle!

5 Wilson: Yeah!

6 Blaine: Okay. We can make it right (.) Let's make it somewhere else then!

7 Gabrielle: Yeah, we don' wanna do it with (them).

((Blaine moves to another spot, about five feet away.))

8 Blaine: Well, what about right here? It's so lonely right here?

9 Gabrielle: This is for gi::rls?

10 Blaine: Yeah, this is only for girls (right here).

12 Lauren: ONLY GIRLS!

13 Susan: Yeah!

14 Lauren: Only girls!

15 Gabrielle: Why are they ((Wilson and Jacob)) following us?

16 Susan: Yeah!

It appeared that Blaine abandoned her plan of keeping Lauren away from the other children as it was completely unsuccessful. Then she and Gabrielle moved from competing for Lauren's attention to cooperating to keep outsiders such as Jacob and Wilson from their play. They created an exclusive in-group in a spot that was "so lonely" and decided that the play was "only for girls." In the following example Gabrielle and Blaine engage in a similar exchange. Blaine had tried to prevent Gabrielle's entry earlier, but when it was unsuccessful, she changed her position to excluding all boys instead.

Example 7.10

((Blaine begins to talk about how Gabrielle will be invited to her birthday party.))

1 Blaine: Because know (what) no boys allowed because know what?

2 Blaine: It's a moik It's a makeup party.

3 Gabrielle: No make sure (.) Make sure it's like a fingernail party?

4 Blaine: Yeah. It's a fingernail party and a makeup party and a hair thas gets done party.

5 Gabrielle: And sleepover party!

6 Blaine: No?

7 Gabrielle: Yeah. Let's make it all kind of (.) of fun things. Right?

8 Blaine: Yeah.

9 Gabrielle: But make sure I have a sleeping bag (.) 'cause I don't have one. I'm looking online though.

Blaine discussed a far-future party and worked with Gabrielle to co-construct the event, thus showing that Gabrielle was no longer excluded and that it was now the boys who were not allowed. In both of these examples, Blaine built a coalition by engaging those she had previously excluded in a new type of exclusion. She created an in-group and found new out-group members to exclude.

Emulating in-group members. When a group of children were playing, they often took behavioral cues from each other, which sometimes led to exclusion. If a newcomer tried to play and was ignored or refused by one person, the other children in the group were likely to respond similarly. Below, when Marianne asked a group of children whether they wanted to join her play, she was refused first by one, and then by all.

Example 7.11[7]

1 Marianne: Who wants to play kittie::s?

2 Gabrielle: Not me.

3 Lauren: Not me.

4 Elizabeth: Not me.

[7] This incident is a part of Example 8.13.

5 Susan: Not me.

6 Blaine: Not me.

Similarly, when Douglas first tried to exclude Gavin by closing their "bakery," the other group members echoed his language of exclusion.

Example 7.12[8]

1 Douglas: Closed, closed. Let's close the store!

2 Jacob: Close it!

3 Joel: Wait a second, wait a second.

4 Douglas: Close it!

5 Joel: Now close it Close it!

6 Jacob: Close it.

7 Douglas: Closed.

Although this behavior was most easily identifiable when children echoed their peers' language of exclusion, the same effect was sometimes accomplished with group silence.

Example 7.13

((Lily walks toward the playscape. She is following Lauren, Gabrielle, Susan and Elizabeth.))

1 Lily: HI::!

((No one responds.))

2 Lily: Triplets, guess what? I moved in my new house today.

((They keep walking and do not respond.))

[8] This episode is a part of Example 8.15.

3 Lily: Maybe-

4 Maggie: Lily, do you have a new room?

5 Lily: ((speaking into the microphone)) Hello, do you hear me? (ha ha)

6 Lily: ((yelling)) HI::

7 Lily: I moved in my new house? Hi:::.

((Lily goes into the shed to begin gathering pots and pans.))

Although no one instigated the exclusion, the children were likely impacted by the other group member's silence and so continued ignoring Lily themselves. Thus, children sometimes excluded simply because other members of their in-group were doing so.

Friendship Helped by Usage of Exclusion

In the previous section I demonstrated how children's peer groups could be strengthened through exclusion. Similarly, exclusion was also used to support individual peer relationships. It appeared that children used exclusion to improve or establish a friendship with a desirable peer. Exclusion was also occasionally enacted to please a friend.

Establishing a friendship. Children used the exclusion of one peer to establish a friendship with another.

Example 7.14

((Zara watches a group of children on the tire swing.))

1 Elsie: Zara.

2 Elsie: Zara.

3 Elsie: Hi Zara.

4 Zara: Hi Elsie.

5 Elsie: I put the golden vest on. hh .hh Do you wanna come play with me?

6 Zara: Um: I wanna play get the swing and ( ).

7 Elsie: Please? You haven't even played with me all day.

8 Zara: But I'm gonna ur. Do you wanna watch ( )?

9 Elsie: Yeah ( ). How about let's sit down on the shade right there? (.) Sound good?

10 Zara: Yeah. (2) But I want to sit down in the sun.

11 Elsie: Alright. Then let's sit.

((Zara indicates the top of the hill. They sit down and proceed to watch the children playing on the tire swing.))

12 Elsie: Nobody but us can do this, right?

While Zara had already agreed to be with Elsie ("Do you wanna watch"), Elsie used an exclusionary tag question ("Nobody but us can do this, right?") to confirm their status as a pair.

In the following example, both Gabrielle and Blaine tried to lure Lauren away from the other, thus excluding their rival and establishing a friendship with Lauren.

Example 7.15[9]

((Lauren is in the play house with Gabrielle, Elizabeth, Susan and Marianne. Blaine is blowing bubbles directly outside the play house window.))

[9] This incident took place immediately after Example 6.9.

1 Blaine: Lauren watch. Lauren. Watch.

2 Lauren: What?

3 Blaine: Lauren, watch.

((Gabrielle and Lauren have stepped outside the play house when Gabrielle whispers into Lauren's ear. Lauren then turns around and walks away from Blaine. Blaine follows her. One minute later Lauren and Gabrielle are back in the play house.))

4 Blaine: This gonna be a bigger one Lauren, This is gonna be a bigger one Lauren.

5 Blaine: Lauren. This's gonna be the bigger one, biggest one ever. Look through the window, Lauren.

6 Lauren: Why?

7 Blaine: Because it's gonna be a bigger. Really big.

((Lauren does not respond or look over at Blaine.))

8 Blaine: SUSAN THERE'S A SPIDER ON YOU! I MEAN LAUREN, THERE'S A SPIDER ON YOU!

9 Lauren: Where?

(The children all look frantically for the spider and an assistant teacher approaches to help find it.))

10 Assistant Teacher: That's okay, we can get it out.

11 Blaine: That spider was on you. That spider was on you.

12 Assistant Teacher: Well, let her come on out then. Come on out.

((Lauren comes out of the house, but no spider is found.))

13 Blaine: Lauren watch. This is goin' to be the biggest one ever.

((Blaine continues to try to get Lauren's attention with her bubbles.))

14 Blaine: No. Try to catch, get a bubble machine and try to do that. Okay? Do it! Try to do it! With that bubble. Over there.

15 Blaine: .HH OH MY GOODNESS NOW THAT 'AS THE BIGGEST ONE!

((Lauren now has a wand and a jar of bubbles.))

16 Blaine: Lauren? Okay. Lemme show you. Now put it behind your mouth, like this? And now blow really gently.

17 Blaine: You see? Let's blow (.) bubbles he- over here.

((Blaine leads Lauren to another part of the yard, away from Gabrielle. Blaine and Lauren engage in various activities together for about four minutes. They then go to the shed to get shovels and afterwards approach Gabrielle, Susan, Marianne and Elizabeth claiming that they've taken all of the sand toys.))

18 Lauren: You used everything!

19 Gabrielle: Sorry! I thought you wanted to come to my house. So if you wanna come to my house you gotta play with me!

20 Lauren: I'm going to their house!

Both Blaine and Gabrielle tried many tactics to gain Lauren's attention, but it was Blaine's brilliant usage of "the spider ploy" that finally succeeded. In each of these examples, children either built or solidified a friendship through exclusion.

Protecting a friendship. When friendships were already established, the children appeared to protect that relationship by excluding any intruders. In particular, when a twosome was playing successfully, they seemed particularly inclined to exclude a newcomer. And when *both* children participated in the exclusion, it further strengthened their bond.

Example 7.16

((Emma and Zeke are walking on the balance beam. James approaches and walks behind them on the beam.))

1 James: I'm walkin' on the balance beam. .hh I'm on it, too.

((Emma and Zeke continue on the balance beam for a few seconds. Then Emma steps off, takes Zeke's hand and begins to walk away, leading Zeke with her.))

2 Emma: Come on::, Zeke.

In the following example, Chloe tried to protect her friendship with Jayda by excluding both Mia and Nathan.

Example 7.17

((Chloe and Jayda are on the swing. Mia comes near them.))

1 Jayda: Okay, come on Mia!

2 Chloe: Yeah! I thought we were doing it all by ourselves!

3 Jayda: Yeah.

((Mia leaves, but then Nathan starts to run toward them. They look at him and Chloe gets off the swing. Jayda follows her as she runs to the puppet theater. Nathan plays by

himself on the tire swing. Chloe and Jayda play alone with the puppets until Mia approaches.))

4 Mia: I wanna do it!

5 Chloe: No, it's my turn to do the show.

6 Mia: I want a ticket-thing.

7 Chloe: Oh. We don't. We're not using tickets today, right?

8 Jayda: Yeah. .hh. This is a show that you don't use tickets.

Although she named both Mia and Jayda as friends during her interview, she went on to describe her preferential feelings for Jayda.

Example 7.18

1 Chloe: If I want, like my own special best friend that's a girl I would have to choose Jayda. And Jayda, and if Jayda doesn't want me as her best friend then guess what?

2 Suzanne: What?

3 Chloe: I can't have my own special friend to myself that's a girl 'cause the only other best friend that I have is Nathan.

She also told Jayda how she felt about her one day during play.

Example 7.19

1 Chloe: You're like the (.) only friend that I keep all .hh the love in to my heart for to give it away to other people. Take it from people, to give to you. You're like the only one of those. That I take- That when they give me the love, I give the love to you.

At another time, *Chloe* was considered the intruder to Jayda and *Nathan's* friendship. Prior to this incident, Chloe had been their connection to each other and I had never seen them play alone together.

Example 7.20

((Nathan has been talking about Pokemon with a number of children while sitting on the playscape.))

1 Jayda: Want to play now? Want to play now? Hey, Nathan, d'you want to play now? Want to play now?

2 Nathan: Yeah.

3 Jayda: Okay. Let's go down here.

((Nathan sits down with Jayda. As they are planning their play, Chloe approaches.))

4 Jayda: Here she COMES!

5 Chloe: Can I play with you?

6 Jayda: NO:::::!

7 Chloe: Ple::::ase! I wanna play Pokemon with you guys.

8 Nathan: WE'RE NOT PLAYING POKEMON! WE'RE PLAYING STAR WARS!

9 Chloe: But ( ) gonna play pokeman together.

10 Nathan: But we're no::::::::t!

((Jayda and Nathan run to the tire swing.))

11 Chloe: I actually don't ( ).Who is Jayda?

12 Jayda: I'm Princess Leia!

13 Chloe: Hm: I'm Obi-Wan. Obi-Wan Kenobi!

((This offer is met with silence.))

14 Jayda: Well. (1) Now that, now that that Ch- Chlo- ( ) Pokemon an' p- Princess Leia let's just s- play no:thin'.

15 Nathan: Let's play power ranger!

16 Jayda: Let's p-

((The children sit down at the edge of the patio area to dump sand from their shoes as requested by a teacher.))

17 Nathan: POWER RANGER!!

18 Chloe: There's a pink one and a yellow one and those are the girls. I wanna be the yellow one.

((A lengthy discussion follows regarding which Power Rangers each child will pretend to be.))

19 Chloe: Me and Jayda are both girls. I'm the yellow and she's pink.

20 Nathan: Hm. I'm not playing power rangers! I'm playing Bionicle.

21 Jayda: And (.) with me, right?

22 Nathan: Uhuh.((affirmative))

23 Jayda: With me, right?

24 Nathan: Uhuh.

((Nathan walks to the water fountain followed by Jayda and then Chloe.))

25 Jayda: We're not playing that. We're not playing power range-

26 Chloe: What?

27 Nathan: WE'RE PLAYING BIONICLES!

28 Chloe: ( ) What bionicles are there?

29 Nathan: Only one girl, and she's ((Jayda)) the girl.

30 Jayda: Uhuh. ((affirmative))

31 Chloe: Why do I have to be the boy?

((Chloe stops trying to enter their play.))

32 Nathan: AH::! CHLO- RUN FOR YOUR LIFE! IT'S Chloe A-BOW-EE.

Jayda and Nathan changed the theme of their game many times, which made it clear they were trying to protect their burgeoning relationship and not a particular game.

Pleasing a friend. Unexpectedly, I found that children occasionally excluded solely to please a peer. Although I did not witness this behavior in a large number of children, it was a very common motive for Jayda; she frequently excluded Chloe to make Ida feel better.

Example 7.21

((Jayda and Chloe have been playing together for a long time in an exciting rescue-themed game. Ida was climbing on the climber by herself but then approaches Jayda.))

1 Ida: Nobody will play (with me).

2 Jayda: I will.

3 Ida: Okay?

4 Jayda: Let's let's play princess!

5 Ida: Yeah.

((Ida takes Jayda's hand, leading her away from the area where Jayda and Chloe had been playing.))

6 Jayda: Okay, let's go! Let's play like pooty poochee!

7 Ida: Yeah!

8 Jayda: Like the princess poops and then we die!

((Chloe runs up to them.))

9 Chloe: Jayda, I thought we were playing together.

10 Jayda: I already played with you. S'my turn to play with her.

11 Chloe: How 'bout it's time to play all together?

12 Jayda: No:::

((Chloe continues to follow them.))

Example 7.22

((Jayda and Ida had played together earlier. After a minor altercation over jump rope, Jayda began to play with Chloe. Meanwhile Ida plays by herself on the climber and the tire swing.))

1 Ida: ((to herself)) Jayda's mean. Why's Chloe so mean when I (come up to) her? (3) °Why is everybody so mean to us?°

((Jayda walks by Ida at the tire swing.))

2 Ida: Jayda.

3 Jayda: Let's not play with Chloe, right?

4 Ida: What?

5 Jayda: Let's not play wi- with Chloe, right?

6 Ida: Yeah. She's boring.

7 Jayda: Here she comes!

8 Ida: Aaaw! (1) Here she come. S'don't let her get us.

9 Ida: I hate her. Do you hate her?

10 Jayda: A little bit?

11 Ida: Well, then I hate her. I hate her.

12 Jayda: What?

13 Ida: I hate her. You're supposed to hate her.

14 Jayda: Me, too. I hate her. I don't like

((Chloe is nowhere nearby and does not ever approach them.))

These examples demonstrate that Jayda tried to be "fair" by taking turns in playing with both Ida and Chloe. When Jayda played with Chloe, Ida frequently moped and got visibly upset (Example 8.18). Jayda was, as a result, highly aware of Ida's feelings and very focused on making her feel better, which led her to exclude Chloe quite frequently. During my interview with Jayda, she explained her behavior.

Example 7.23

1 Suzanne: Sometimes I've noticed that you and Ida play together and sometimes you and Chloe play together. What happens when all three of you play together?

2 Jayda: Ida gets upset. She (never) does that.

3 Suzanne: She she gets upset?

4 Jayda: Uh huh.

5 Suzanne: Why does she get upset?

6 Jayda: And sh- because she doesn't like Chloe.

7 Suzanne: Oh she doesn't like Chloe?

8 Jayda: She al- when I play with Chloe she she sometimes says, "No! Call you poo poo!" She said that.

9 Suzanne: About you or about Chloe?

10 Jayda: Me.

((turns omitted))

11 Jayda: And if you make new friends, then <u>you</u> will have a lot of friends.

12 Suzanne: And then if I had a lot of friends that would help?

13 Jayda: Well <u>yeah::</u>, but (.) I still didn't make that choice.

14 Suzanne: You still didn't make that choice? You made the choice to play with Ida?

15 Jayda: No:: Well I made that choice and I shouldn't make a lot of (.) friends.

16 Suzanne: Oh, you made the choice that you shouldn't make a lot of friends? How come?

17 Jayda: ºBecause it might hurt peoples' feelings.º

((turns omitted))

18 Jayda: ºTha's. º Well I shouldn't make a lot of <u>frie:nds</u> so I won' so I so I won't so I can' I shouldn't make a lot of frie:nds. I should only make two friends or one friend?

19 Suzanne: How come though?

20 Jayda: We::ll to (.) make Ida happy.

21 Suzanne: Wow. You are really thinking about making her happy.

22 Jayda: Mmhm. Than just making her sad, that wouldn't be nice.

Discussion

As demonstrated above, children exclude their peers to support both individual and group relationships. Young children use a variety of techniques to "establish a common, predictable 'social order…including rules for who [i]s to be included in the play and who ha[s] the power to decide this" (Lofdalhl & Hagglund, 2006, p. 180). In other words, as children play, they may use exclusion to solidify an in-group, act in accordance with other group members, become part of an in-group or ensure that the group membership is stable.

Adler and Adler (1995) suggest that an in-group will solidify group membership and further delineate boundaries through exclusion of anyone in the out-group. "Cohesion and integration, the management of in-group and out-group relationships, and submission to the clique's leaders…are rooted, along with other sources of domination and power, in the exclusionary dynamics of cliques" (p. 153). Goodwin similarly noted that "exclusion can develop in line with a social group's strong feelings of differentiation of in-group and out-group membership" (2006, p. 222). Amongst the group Goodwin was observing (4th grade girls), the exclusion centered on a particular child. "Forms of exclusion were quite evident in the clique with respect to their interactions with a 'tagalong' girl—a person

defined in terms of her efforts to affiliate to a particular group without being accepted by the group" (Goodwin, 2002, p. 404).

Group boundaries are also further delineated when group members take exclusionary cues from each other. When one child excludes, other peers in the same in-group are likely to also exclude, often using similar language or behavior to do so (Examples 7.11, 7.12). This group solidarity further defines an in-group and shows outsiders who belongs and who doesn't. "Many clique members relished the opportunity to go along with such exclusive activities, welcoming the feelings of privilege, power and inclusion" (Adler & Adler, 1995, p. 155). In other words, by excluding, children feel included.

For those not yet part of a group, exclusion may be one way to gain entry. Goodwin (2006) notes that, through labeling *someone else* an outsider, a marginal group member could occasionally secure a place on the inside. "While generally marginalized, on this occasion Angela collaborates in the construction of negative commentary about an absent party. Angela's embodied participation in the sequence is ratified by the other girls" (2006, p. 206). During her exclusionary derogation of an absent clique member (who had offended members of the in-group), Angela became, albeit briefly, fully accepted by the other children. In my own observations, I saw many children who demonstrated their belonging by excluding a peer whose position was even more marginal than their own (Example 6.14).

Exclusion in support of in-group cohesion is common, but, as mentioned in the literature review (Chapter 2), protecting individual friendships is also an important cause

of peer exclusion during early childhood. As a result of young children's developmental understanding, friendships seem to be constantly under threat and preschoolers are "often insecure about maintaining close friendships" (Corsaro, 2003, p. 74). Because children are focused on their ongoing play, it is this play that tends to define friendship (Parker & Gottman, 1989). Therefore, a friend is the person you are currently playing with (Corsaro, 1985; Selman, 1980). "We're friends because we're playing together, we're sharing and we're doing it all on our own without the help or interference of adults or other kids" (Corsaro, 2003, p. 69). This means that when a child is *not* playing with that preferred peer, the friendship is called into question. And when another child joins the play of two friends, the children may believe that the newcomer would become friends with one, leaving the other, in their mind, friendless. Young children may, therefore, exclude quite frequently to preserve friendships that are currently successful.

In particular, it appears that two children playing together are a stable configuration that is particularly resistant to intrusion. Because younger children tend to play in dyads (Ladd, Price & Hart, 1990) and playing in smaller groups is easier and more likely to be successful for preschoolers (Parker & Gottman, 1989), it follows that a twosome is a more stable and, therefore, less interruptible social grouping. In some cases, the exclusion itself may be what strengthens the friendship. As mentioned in the literature review (Chapter 2), by opposing the entry attempts of a new child, playmates may find a commonality with each other on which to build their relationship (Corsaro, 1985). This was clearly evident when Elsie suggested to Zara that "Nobody but us can do this, right?" (Example 7.14).

One particularly interesting cause of exclusion was the usage of exclusion to satisfy a friend, as when Jayda excluded Chloe to prevent Ida from becoming upset. (Examples. 7.21, 7.22). Although both Ida and Chloe were frequently left out of Jayda's play, they reacted very differently. Ida would get dramatically upset but Chloe made a great effort not to look at all bothered. In fact, she actually began to hum and skipped away to pick flowers after one particularly harsh exclusion (Example 10.2.)! Therefore, Jayda may have been protecting Ida in accordance with cultural norms for girls that focus on being kind and taking care of friends (Francis, 1998; Gilligan, 1993). In many ways, Jayda embodied the stereotype of the American, middle-class, feminine, little girl: she typically wore dresses and Mary Jane's, she spoke in a gentle, high pitched voice, and her drawings were almost exclusively of rainbows and flowers. She never raised her voice in anger or acted aggressively, and she was generally biddable and compliant with adults. In short, she embodied the selfless-sensible stereotype commonly associated with early childhood girls (Francis, 1998). Because American middle-class girls are socialized into an "ethic of care," that includes being kind and loyal to one's friends (Gilligan, 1993), Jayda may have felt a sense of responsibility for Ida's feelings that led her to exclude Chloe.

Chapter 8: Contextual Exclusion

Exclusion also occurred when the current circumstances left little room for inclusion. This cause of exclusion was the most difficult to categorize because contextual exclusion had a number of disparate forms: at times a child's *environment* made it difficult to include a particular peer, on other occasions preservation of the *play* necessitated exclusion and finally the exclusion sometimes became a *pattern* that was difficult to break out of.

Environmental Factors that Lead to Exclusion

Children used exclusion to protect both the materials they were using and their actual play space.

Protecting materials. Children excluded when they perceived that there were not enough materials for all the potential players to use.

Example 8.1

((Chloe and Jayda are sitting in the sand under the playscape slides. Chloe is sliding a large metal tub back and forth on the surface of the sand when Mia approaches.))

1 Mia: What are you making?

((Chloe does not respond.))

2 Mia: What are you making Chloe?

3 Chloe: Not telling.

4 Mia: What are you doing?

((Mia tries to grab the tub.))

5 Mia: What are you mak- um::

6 Chloe: Not allowed to touch it! Only my dog can touch it! And make sure it's.

((Mia grabs the tub and picks it up. Mia sits down near Jayda with the tub and begins to scoop sand into it. Chloe walks over to her and takes the big tub back. She walks a few feet away and sits down. Mia gets up and walks over to Chloe.))

7 Chloe: Make your own bed ( ).

8 Chloe: Mi::a::, stop!

9 Mia: Perfect. It's perfect for me.

10 Chloe: Drop it, Mia.

11 Mia: I want one like a bed.

12 Chloe: Whose bed is that?

13 Mia: It's mine.

((There is an altercation between Mia, Peter and Nathan about the sand area where Mia is playing. She then returns to her conversation with Chloe.))

14 Mia: Can I have that to make my bed?

15 Chloe: No!

16 Mia: Now?

17 Chloe: No! You may not make your own bed!

18 Mia: ((whining)) Wh:::y?

19 Chloe: 'Cause you have to sleep in this cold tent!

Example 8.2

1 Asher: I like to play baseketball.

2 Walt: Well, let's get some.

((Asher and Walt walk over to two basketballs sitting out on the patio and pick them up.))

3 Walt: This is mine! NO this one!

((James approaches and takes a ball out of Walt's hands.))

4 James: ( ) [play basketball.

5 Asher: [That one's mine!

6 Walt: Awwww! Hey!

7 James: Take turns with the ball!

8 Walt: That one is mine!

9 James: Well, how…I said (we could take) turns with [the ball.

10 Walt: [Yeah.

11 James: Okay, it's my turn.

12 Walt: Tha' wa- (1) How 'bout we each get five minute turns?

13 Assistant Teacher: Five minute turns sounds like a good idea.

((Walt takes the ball. Asher and Walt dribble their balls standing next to each other on the patio. James walks a few feet away to the sand pit and stands watching. Less than two minutes later, James approaches Walt again.))

14 James: ( ) minutes I wanna play with the basketball.

15 Walt: In five minutes.

16 James: (It has to be five) more minutes. I wanna play with the basketball, Walt.

17 Walt: It's not five more minutes yet.

18 James: No it has to be. It has to be this many minutes. ((He holds up all ten fingers.)) I let you play with it for a long, long time.

19 Walt: Ten minutes. Okay.

((James returns to his spot on the edge of the sand and sits down, digging with his hands while watching the basketball players.))

Although such exclusion seemed necessary to protect play materials, children were sometimes able to keep others from using needed materials in ways that were non-exclusionary.

Example 8.3

((Cameron puts his shovel inside the bucket that Peter is holding.))

1 Cameron: Dur- where's your but- bucket? (1) You had a bucket. I'm not giving you mine!

((Peter returns the bucket to Cameron and they continue playing.))

It is important to note that the children may have used the actual shortage of materials as an excuse to prevent an unwanted peer from entering. Although I have only used incidents in which the exclusion occurred when supplies were inadequate, it was not possible to determine whether the children actually cared about the materials in question.

Example 8.4

((Lily and Maggie approach Gabrielle, Elizabeth, Susan, Lauren and Blaine who are digging with shovels to fill buckets or muffin tins.))

1 Lily: Can I work with y'all?

2 Gabrielle: Well, there's no more shovels.

During the course of the study, Gabrielle excluded Lily more frequently than she excluded any other child. Additionally, Gabrielle may have been trying to protect a newly formed in-group from intrusion. Therefore, the lack of shovels may have been merely an excuse to prevent Lily from playing.

Preserving or protecting the play space. Children also excluded to prevent a scarcity of *space* during their play. They used exclusion to prevent overcrowding as well as to gain possession of a defined playground area for their group. In my observations, exclusion to protect space was far more common than exclusion to preserve materials.

Example 8.5

((Zeke has been working by himself with a shovel, truck and bucket in the sand area under the slides. Asher, Walt and Emma walk into this space and sit down.))

1 Asher: ((to Zeke)) We're using this place. This is ours, nobody else can use it!

((They continue to play in this spot and spread their materials and play out, essentially taking over the area. They also communicate loudly with each other and make sound effects to support their play.))

2 Zeke: It's my place, though.

3 Zeke: ((sounding very distressed)) It's not my place anymore!

((Zeke stands up and walks away from the sand area, carrying his truck.))

Although the following exclusion incident was initially about a shortage of materials, it eventually became apparent that control of the play house was more important.

Example 8.6

((Elizabeth, Lauren, Susan and Gabrielle are in the play house when Lily approaches.))

1 Lily: Can I work with y'all?

((No one responds to her.))

2 Lily Can I work with y'all?

((There is still no response.))

3 Lily: Can I work with y'all?

4 Lauren: But there's, but you have to get some pans and there's only o::ne left.

((Lily enters the house and talks about her clothing with some of the children She eventually leaves and returns with a trowel. She plays in the house for one minute.))

5 Gabrielle: Hey, we were here fir:st!

6 Lily: No I was, 'cause I was [(already) working here!

7 Gabrielle: [But you left. You left!

8 Lauren: You left.

9 Lily: But I want to play here.

The tire swing was a common site for exclusion based on space constraints. The chains holding the tire in place divided the swing into thirds. Although up to six children could fit on the swing, the children often capped the number of riders at three, one for each section. As with constrained materials, it was sometimes difficult to determine whether the exclusion was genuinely about the space or whether lack of space was merely an excuse.

Example 8.7

((Leisel, Eden and Effie are on the swing. Gary and Eleanor approach.))

1 Gary: Hey. Shiko will try to stop the swing!

((Gary grabs at the swing as it moves back and forth.))

2 Eden: Hey, stop that! You can't pull my shirt.

3 Eden: We already have three people on.

4 Effie: Yeah.

5 Eleanor: Hey, I can- I can get on. I can get on just if [someone'll make some space for me.

6 Leisel: ((Leisel gets of the swing)) [Here

7 Eleanor: Oh thank you Leisel

8 Leisel: I'm going to push anyway.

((A few seconds later, Annie approaches the swing and wants to get on.))

9 Leisel: 'Cause there's no more room now. You can wait, Annie.

Children excluded for two primary environmental reasons: to keep their materials from being taken or to prevent their space from being usurped or too cramped.

Protecting Play

To ensure the continuation of a successful game, children sometimes tried to keep an interloper out of their play. Such incidents looked similar to exclusion that attempted to control play or to protect a friendship, but was quite distinct from both. When children sought control, they tried to make all the decisions about a particular game regardless of how it affected the play (Examples 6.4, 6.6) and when a friendship was at stake, the

excluder focused on being with their friend instead of a particular game (Example 7.20). Conversely, a child trying to protect their play emphasized preservation of an ongoing game.

Preserving a game. A newcomer's entry into an ongoing game could ruin the play as more people made it more difficult to sustain. The tire swing again provided a useful setting to witness this type of exclusion.

Example 8.8

((Six children are squeezed onto the tire swing as it is pushed in big, arcing circles by an assistant teacher.))

1	Eleanor:	Guys, now is okay if I push?

((The children on the swing shake their heads indicating "no."))

2	Eleanor:	Now's okay if I push?
3	Mikayla:	No:::::
4	Eleanor:	It's okay if I push?
5	Mikayla:	No::
6	Eleanor:	°Now's okay if I push?°
7	MIkayla:	No:::
8	Eden:	[No!
9	Annie:	[No::::
10	Mikayla:	Let's go play.
11	Annie:	No:::::
12	Mikayla:	I'm gon' play.

13 Annie: I'm gonna play, too.

Preschoolers are not skilled at judging their own abilities in comparison to others (Ruble, Eisenberg & Higgins, 1994) and so tend to believe that they are perfectly competent at anything they undertake (Berk, 2009). Therefore, Eleanor believed that she could push the swing with the same skill level as an adult but her peers, perhaps because they were sitting on the swing and physically experiencing the difference between an adult's and a young child's pushes, were aware of this deficit. Interestingly, this meant that her exclusion was a direct result of her cognitive development.

In the following example, Peter had tried to enter an established cooking game with Chloe and Nathan but was rebuffed. Chloe eventually gave in but put strict limits on his participation. Chloe may have been cognizant that Peter was not particularly skilled at following other's cues during play (Examples 4.1, 4.2), and, therefore, may have tried to protect their game.

Example 8.9

1 Peter: It's a feast for me, too.

2 Chloe: No:::: A::ctually whoever is helping us ( ) get in the ( ). We have to decide together who can <u>have</u> (the food). But whoever wants to <u>cook</u> with us can <u>cook</u> with us. Right (Nathan)?

3 Peter: I want to cook with you!

4 Chloe: You can <u>cook</u> with us. That's (okay, but you can't) actually <u>eat</u>.

5 Peter: But I'm still helping!

((Chloe and Nathan are seated close together, but Peter is seated a little bit further away. He occasionally makes offers but generally, he works independently.))

6 Chloe: ((talking to the teacher)) Peter and Mia are helping us make the food. But we're making it for us ((indicating herself and Nathan)).

Avoiding interruption. Children may also exclude their peers to avoid being interrupted. Although similar, this type of exclusion was actually distinct from preserving a game. Children who wished to avoid interruption were in the middle of something at that very moment (a conversation, a play exchange, playing out a particular part of a game, etc.). Conversely, a child who tried to preserve their game using exclusion wanted to prevent the entire game from disintegrating.

Here is it clear that Mia's intrusion was an interruption to Chloe's play.

Example 8.10

((Chloe is putting on a puppet show with a few children watching. Mia comes behind the puppet theater and tries to take a rabbit puppet out of Chloe's hands.))

1 Chloe: No::, Mia.

2 Chloe: Mia, this is my show and you have to wait until the next show.

Example 8.11

((Jayda and Ida are on the tire swing. Jayda is pretending to be a scared cat while Ida is her protector and caregiver. Ryan approaches and gives them a small push to start them moving.))

1 Ryan: Hi guys!

2 Jayda: ((screams))

3 Ida: (We) don't wanna be swinged!

((Ryan leaves the area)).

4 Jayda: ((pretends to cry))

5 Ida: ((in a high pitched, gentle voice to mark that she is speaking in character)) It's not that guy that you're afraid of. .hh It's just my friend. .hh °I have a friend.° Even the one you're scared of (1) it's my friend.

Because Ryan was a very well liked child and was on friendly terms with Jayda and Ida, their exclusion seemed most likely to be about the interruption to their game.

Changing agendas. When a child approached a group of peers to play, the way that they approached them was clearly critical. I recorded many instances of children who tried to join in play while simultaneously asking the players to change their play agenda. These entering children either requested that the group play a different game or that they undertake major alterations to the game they were playing. Children who requested such changes were likely to be excluded.

Example 8.12

((Zara and Elsie have been playing together for some time under the playscape. Effie walks up to them.))

1 Effie: Don't you wanna plant flowers?

2 Zara: Nah.

3 Elsie: Na:h. We're playing doctor with Zeke.

Example 8.13[10]

((Marianne approaches the play house where five children are pretending to cook.))

1	Marianne:	Who wants to play kittie:::s?

((There is no response.))

2	Marianne:	Who wants to play kittie::s?
3	Gabrielle:	Not me.
4	Lauren:	Not me.
5	Elizabeth:	Not me.
6	Susan:	Not me.
7	Blaine:	Not me.
8	Assistant teacher:	(Marianne, you could be) baking kitties?
9	Marianne:	No::: (.) Who wants to?
10	Assistant teacher:	They're baking. I think they're gonna be baking ( ).
11	Gabrielle:	We're NOT kitties! (1) We're people.

As Marianne approached the group enthusiastically, she seemed to actually want some children to play with her. She may have simply not understood the consequences of her rigidity or been able to alter her behavior in response to their refusal.

The following example demonstrated that even a dramatic and attractive change in agendas warranted exclusion.

[10] This is a continuation of Example 7.11.

Example 8.14

((Annie stands below Zara, Elsie, Effie and Emma, who are in a tunnel on the playscape. She looks up at them a number of times and begins to scream.))

1 Annie: It's coming! (1) Aa:::::::h! A TORNADO!

((She repeats her scream until all the children in the tunnel are looking down at her.))

2 Annie: A TORNADO, GUYS! Look it, LOOK AHEAD OF US. THE TORNADO! IT'S CLOSE TO ME.

3 Zara: ((to Elsie, Effie and Emma)) °It's not close, no.°

((Annie points and looks up at the sky. She then looks at the children in the tunnel. She repeats this a number of times.))

4 Annie: ((high pitched screaming))

((The children stop watching her and continue their play.))

In my data, I found 16 exclusion incidents where children requested a change in agendas. A number of times the nature of the incident caused me to reconsider whether such behavior was, in fact, peer exclusion. It seemed unreasonable to expect a child to include a peer in ongoing play when inclusion would necessitate shifting to an entirely different game. But I eventually decided that such behavior was, in fact, exclusion. The entering children *did* want to join in the ongoing play of their peers. They merely used a spectacularly ineffective strategy to do so.

Repetitive Exclusion

On a number of occasions, I observed the exclusion of a particular child become a continuing habit. In such cases, the original motivation for the exclusion became

irrelevant and exclusion eventually became the expected response to that peer's repeated entry attempts. Such exclusion developed when a pattern was established, when the exclusion became a part of the children's play, or when one child developed an oppositional stance to another.

Pattern of exclusion. I observed a few incidents wherein children would repeatedly exclude a particular peer. When that child first tried to enter play, they were typically excluded for a specific reason. But as they continued to attempt entry into the same game, a pattern of excluding them was established and the original motivation for exclusion no longer mattered. Of course, such repeated exclusion was only possible when the excludee *also* became involved in the pattern and continued trying to join the game, in spite of multiple refusals. This type of exclusion was characterized by many repeated, quick, refusals and was reminiscent of a disagreement chain (Gottman, 1983); for example, a simple back and forth argument of "No!" and "Yes!"

The following incident shows only the first minute of a five-minute exclusion pattern.

Example 8.15[11]

((Jacob, Keenan, Douglas and Joel are working under a playscape tower in the sand. They are baking and have just loudly announced that they are planning to sell their baked goods. Gavin approaches the store counter but Douglas holds out his arm with his hand signaling stop.))

1 Douglas: No. Not fo- Not for (.) Gavin! Not for Gavin! (2) Not for sill-. No.

[11] A continuation of Example 7.12

2 Jacob: NO. (1) You give us money first.

3 Douglas: Closed, closed. Let's close the store!

4 Jacob: Close it!

5 Joel: Wait a second, wait a second.

6 Douglas: Close it!

7 Joel: Now close it. Close it!

8 Jacob: Close it.

9 Douglas: Closed.

((Gavin walks away but soon approaches again. Douglas grabs the bucket and tray that were sitting on the counter where customers approach. When Gavin comes around the side of the counter Douglas grabs onto him.))

10 Teacher: Douglas! Douglas, take your hand away from Gavin's body.

11 Jacob: °Closed. Closed.°

12 Douglas: ‘Kay.

13 Douglas: It's closed Gavin.

14 Douglas: Okay, open nine o'clock of the morning.

15 Jacob: It's open at nine o'clock in the morning.

16 Keenan: Yeah!

17 Gavin: I can't count that very much. Only get like five minutes or six or seven or eight.

18 Douglas: It's morning, it's morning, though. It's two o'clock, right?

19 Gavin: Okay, here's leaves.

((Gavin tries to give Jacob some leaves representing payment.))

20 Douglas: No! It's not open yet.

Each time Gavin approached the bakery Douglas "closed" the store or said the desired item was unavailable. Although Douglas may have initially had another reason to prevent Gavin's entry into the play (because he acted young, because he was not a sophisticated playmate or because Douglas was playing with a close group of friends), the exclusion soon became about the pattern. Once that pattern was established, it was "expected" that Douglas continue to exclude Gavin. This type of exclusion fed on itself and only seemed to end when one party completely left the interaction.

The game of exclusion. There was also a more playful version of this exclusion pattern. This exclusion may also have begun for a real reason, but the excluders then seemed to create a game from the continuous exclusion of a peer.

Example 8.16

((Gavin and Maggie try to enter a small cardboard box where Jacob and Wilson are hiding. Maggie squeals loudly.))

1 Jacob: Stop it.

((He sticks out his hand to try to prevent them from entering the box.))

2 Wilson: Close the door.

((Maggie and Gavin are holding hands while trying to get in the box.))

3 Jacob: You're <u>too:::</u> la:te.

4 Gavin: Oh we are?

5 Jacob: No, to get in the box.

((Maggie and Gavin briefly run away and then return to the boxes.))

6 Wilson: Nanna, nanna, boo, boo'm out of it!

((Wilson steps out of the box and then quickly back into it.))

7 Jacob: (ha ha ha) Nanna, nanna, booboo! I'm out of it (ha ha ha).

((Jacob does the same, jumping quickly back into the box when Maggie and Gavin look at him.))

8 Maggie: (I'm) gettin' in [here.

9 Jacob: [No. No!

10 Jacob: No, Maggie. Go in the big one.

((Jacob sticks out his feet to prevent Maggie from getting in.))

11 Maggie Ow:! You're scraping my ankles!

12 Jacob Then get out of this box.

13 Maggie: Okay. I'm too (.) old.

14 Gavin: I know, I'll ( ).

15 Jacob: You're too::: little.

16 Wilson: Nanny, nanny, booboo!

Jacob and Wilson marked the playfulness of the exclusion by calling out, "nanna nanna boo boo." The game-like nature of the exclusion was also evident from Jacob's excitement and smiles during the entire incident. Like the pattern of exclusion described above, this game was only successful because Maggie and Gavin continued to attempt entry into the box.

Example 8.17

((Ida is sitting alone and singing softly to herself on the slide. Jayda approaches her.))

1 Jayda: Are you okay? You want to play with me now?

2 Jayda: Let's go play. Let's play!

3 Ida: Yeah! Let's play. Come here!

4 Jayda: Yeah. (1) We can play the lava game, excep-

5 Ida: Yeah. And let's not let, and let's not let her ((Chloe)) pl- Let's pretend she's the monster of the (escaped) and trying to ge- uh- Mr. Electric.

6 Jayda: Yeah.

7 Ida: And pretend she's Mr. Electric trying to eat us.

8 Jayda: Yeah. Trying to poop on us.

9 Ida: Yeah, too. Yeah.

This exclusionary game originated because Ida was probably trying to prevent Jayda from playing with Chloe but the exclusion then became a game they were playing about.

Oppositional stance. A more serious version of this repeated exclusion occurred when one child appeared to form an oppositional relationship with one of their peers. In other words, they began to see that peer as an enemy—as someone who was "against" them. And exclusion was one effective way to directly oppose a peer. Ida seemed to believe that she and Chloe were competitors for Jayda's attention and so occasionally took an oppositional stance against Chloe.

Example 8.18

((Ida and Jayda are in a cardboard box pretending it is their house.))

1 Chloe: Can I play with you guys?

2 Ida: No.

((Jayda leaves the box to begin play with Chloe and Nathan. The teacher has noticed the conflict and has approached Ida to ask what is happening.))

3 Ida: ((to teacher)) Jayda is not playing with me. And Chloe is making Jayda play with her and I don't like it.

4 Ida: ((to Jayda)) When you don't play with me it makes me sad.

5 Chloe: ((to teacher)) I just came up and asked them if I could play with them and they said no.

6 Jayda: It's okay if she plays with us.

7 Teacher: I think that Chloe and Jayda and Nathan have all agreed to play Pokemon together.

((The teacher tries to help facilitate a game that all four children will play.))

8 Ida: Let's play princesses!

9 Ida: I don't think he'll ((she points to Nathan)) want to play princesses.

10 Chloe: We could play kitties.

11 Ida: I don't <u>like</u> kitties.

((Ida leaves the game and begins to walk around the yard on her own. She makes sobbing noises and wanders from place to place. Sitting on the bridge, Ida begins to talk to herself.))

12 Ida: NO Nathan, NO Chloe, I do not want to play with you <u>ever again</u>.

13 Ida: It's no fai::r. Chloe's the boss of everybody.

14 Ida: Why do they always believe Chloe? (.) That's not fair.

15 Ida: I am never going to like Jayda. I am never going to invite her ever. I guess I should never. °Never ever. °

16 Ida: ((singing low and slowly)) Why is this sadness I never? Don't let it be over.

17 Ida: ((singing)) It is over. Why is it over?

18 Ida: ((singing)) Can't be. Can't be. It's over! It's over.

The opposition was particularly evident when Ida suggested they play "princesses," which ensured Nathan would not accept the suggestion, and also when Ida refused Chloe's offer to play "kitties," which she commonly played with Jayda. When this did not result in the group's disintegration, Ida acted out her opposition and self-exclusion very dramatically.

In the following example, Maggie, Lily and Blaine seemed determined to create a dramatic oppositional stance although none had previously existed.

Example 8.19

((Lily and Maggie are in the play house. Wilson and Aaron step into it and try to pick up materials to begin cooking.))

1 Lily: HEY I'm working here! Get 'em out of here!

2 Maggie: Me too.

3 Lily: No.

((Aaron and Wilson leave the house and Blaine enters. Shortly afterwards, Jacob looks through the window of the house.))

4 Lily: Stop! Stop!

5 Jacob: Hey Lily, Maggie. Wanna be the troll?

6 Maggie: N(h)o.

7 Jacob: ((to Blaine)) Wanna be the troll?

8 Blaine: W:hat?

9 Jacob: Yum Yum Ya::!

10 Maggie: That's silly!

11 Lily: No Jacob. Nope.

((Wilson and Jacob try to buy food from Lily and Maggie.))

12 Maggie: We're not selling! Make your own food!

13 Blaine: Yeah! Make your own. Make your own pie.

14 Maggie: (Good to) know what's going to happen. I'm gonna fio- I'm gonna (fire some snow balls).

15 Lily: How 'bout snow bellies? ((Snow Bellies appear to be an offer of something poisonous and very dangerous.))

16 Jacob: [Nah!

17 Blaine: [Yeah!

18 Lily: We're gonna give you snow bellie::s!

((Lily and Maggie continue to threaten Wilson and Jacob who stay around, trying to join in the play.))

19 Maggie: Don't do it! (1) Teacher! Jacob throw sand! ((No sand was thrown.))

20 Teacher: Who threw sand?

21 Maggie: Jacob!

22 Blaine: Yeah.

((The teacher works with Maggie and Lily to talk to Jacob.))

23 Maggie: Don't throw sand.

((The teacher asks Jacob and Wilson to leave the house area.))

24 Maggie: Okay. Now we got rid of them.

During my observations, the formation of an oppositional stance was rare. But when it did occur, the opposition continued for extended periods and the children were unlikely to simply abandon the stance or forget about it. This opposition seemed to attract bystanders to join a side and also resulted in continued exclusion whenever the opposing parties came in contact. In fact, the nature of *all* repetitive exclusion ensured that it generally continued throughout the children's outdoor play period.

Discussion

Protecting materials and space. Corsaro (1985) observed children excluding "on the basis of [the] ecological constraints of the school" (p. 130) when they made "specific claims of ownership of objects or areas of play" (p. 129) or made "reference(s) to space or number of people" (p. 130) while excluding. It appears that even young children understand the concrete and finite aspects of their environment (e.g., the number of toys available) and are conscious of "the organizational features and rules of the school" (e.g., a group of children playing in a small space effectively control that space; Corsaro, p. 133). "Using that ownership [of a space] in asserting power and control over the physical

environment by means such as exclusion…[becomes] the primary issue of conflict related to spaces in both the indoor and the outdoor environments of the preschool setting" (Majumdar, 2010, p. 123). Chen, Fine, Killen and Tam (2001) found that conflicts (which should not be equated with exclusion) arose around the distribution of resources (58%) far more commonly than around any other reason (i.e., physical harm, psychological harm, play ideas or rule violations). Although a preschooler may not be able to articulate that fewer available materials and a more crowded play space will negatively impact their play, these are real problems for young children. In fact, a greater number of children in a given play area results in less time actually engaged in play for the children present (Kantrowitz & Evans, 2004). Also, the fewer materials available, the more conflict will be present (Ramsey, 1986). Thus, limitations in materials and space will commonly cause exclusion.

The way that a school environment is set up may contribute to the amount of exclusion in a classroom. The playground contained many spaces that naturally limited access: the two play houses were both quite small (approximately 4 by 5 feet), defined areas under and on the playscape were often used for play (e.g., under a 3 x 4 playscape platform or in a tunnel), and there were a number of large cardboard boxes in the yard during much of my data collection. Although the outdoor environment was quite large, it was made up of smaller, more defined, spaces that the children commonly used to set their play space apart. As mentioned previously, exclusion over a lack of materials occurred, but was rare. Most materials in the school were plentiful, but there were some

items that occasionally caused exclusion or other conflicts to occur (e.g., there were only two large muffin tins and one large basting tub, which were quite popular).

The teachers were also an important factor in determining whether exclusion occurred related to space or materials limitations. Inside the classroom there were strict rules in all three classrooms about how many children could play in many of the areas. For example, in the Pre-K classroom, only four children were allowed in the block area at a time (approximately 6 by 8 feet). Although there were few strict rules about the number of children in a particular space outdoors, the teachers were very aware of space concerns and overcrowding. For example, the tire swing was usually capped at three children, although occasionally they allowed up to six children to get on. Additionally the number of play materials available to the children was, to some extent, decided by the teachers. Although there were some toys available that the children had access to each day, there were others that the teachers only took out occasionally.

Young children will be sensitive to limitations of space and materials because of the way they think, but the playground environment itself and the teachers' guidance make this even more relevant for the children. Therefore, it is developmentally normative for children to exclude based on a scarcity of resources or space, but particular environments may increase (or decrease) the children's usage of exclusion for these reasons.

Preserving play. Play serves many important purposes during early childhood (e.g., helping children cope with fears, aiding them in learning new information, etc.). Therefore, young children may enact social behaviors aimed at the successful

continuation of such high level, coordinated play (Parker & Gottman, 1989). But, as Corsaro (2003) explains below, young children can have a difficult time sustaining play.

> "As adults we can easily suspend our interactions and conversations to handle brief disruptions like phone calls or a crying child and pick up where we left off. It's not so easy for three-to five-year olds. Establishing and maintaining peer interaction are challenging tasks for kids who are in the process of developing the linguistic and cognitive skills necessary for communication and social interaction. Furthermore, the social ecology of most preschools increases the fragility of peer interaction. A preschool play area is a multiparty setting much like a cocktail party with lots of clusters of kids playing together. Kids know from experience that at any moment a dispute might arise over the nature of play, other kids might want to play or take needed materials or a teacher might announce "clean-up time." Kids work hard to get things going and then, just like that, someone always messes things up" (pp. 40-41).

Therefore, (as described in the literature review, Chapter 2) young children may try to control the success of their play using social strategies such as exclusion (Parker & Gottman).

Seen in this light, the children's attempts to prevent intrusion when they are playing are not merely egocentric or pleasure-seeking, but are serving important developmental goals. Although a young child may not be conscious of their desire for successful play, their choice of playmates indicates that this is a primary concern. Young children will, therefore, choose playmates that "maximize[e] their level of enjoyment, entertainment, and satisfaction experienced in their play" (Parker & Gottman, 1989, p. 104). And this satisfaction "depends almost completely on the level of coordination

achieved" (Parker & Gottman, p. 104). Such play is more easily achieved by small groups of children who know each other well (Matthews, 1978).

New children entering a game are one of the most disruptive forces to successful play. In particular, pretend games, which require the highest level of interaction, are subject to destruction and so are carefully guarded.

> "Fantasy play has the highest reward potential as well as the highest potential for conflict. When children are comfortable with one another, when they are capable of anticipating each other's upcoming moves and when they share similar concerns, fantasy play proceeds relatively smoothly. When children are unable to second guess one another or when their concerns are dissimilar, fantasy play rapidly deteriorates under the weight of disagreement after disagreement (Parker & Gottman, 1989, p. 106).

Therefore, those trying to enter ongoing pretend play are most likely to be excluded.

DiLalla and Watson (1988) found that 3 and 4 year olds typically have to "stop the play and step outside the fantasy to deal with, narrate or explain the interruption" (p. 289). Not until children are five or six years old are they able to "discuss an interruption or change while remaining in character and without leaving the fantasy story" (DiLalla & Watson, p. 289). So each time the children need to address a newcomer, they are likely to stop their play and come out of character to do so. Interestingly, I was unable to see age differences in how play interruptions were treated: the five-year-olds I observed did not generally stay in character when someone new approached any more than the four-year-olds did. However, this may have had more to do with the data that I captured (or the style of interruption) than each child's cognitive ability to assimilate new information into a game and sustain coordinated play. Because my data was focused around

exclusion, we were not searching for detailed descriptions of children's entry into play and so probably recorded less information on smooth transitions to play than those that were disruptive to the game and/or resulted in exclusion.

In conclusion, when children interrupt their peer's play, try to change the game that is being played or do something that threatens the success of a game, they are likely to be excluded. Because young children work so hard to play successfully with each other, when they exclude they are sometime simply trying to "keep sharing what they are already sharing" (Corsaro, 2003, p. 41).

Repetitive exclusion. Conversation Analysis (CA) provides an interesting way to look at children's repetitive exclusion of their peers. According to CA, it is easier to respond positively to a yes/no question as it does not require any sort of explanation or an excuse, whereas a negative response could require this (Kitzinger & Frith, 2001). And so refusal of such a request is considered to be a "dispreferred response" (Nosfinger, 1991). Therefore, according to CA, when a young child asks to play, saying "no" to this request is more difficult than accepting that child. However, this same theory posits that once a person verbally commits to an action they have, in effect, promised to do that particular thing (Nosfinger). Therefore, once a child says they are *not* going to let a particular peer play, they will then try to follow through on their promise (to not let the peer play). So the dispreferred response ("no, you can't play") then becomes preferred, expected and consequently, easy to repeat. In this way, multiple instances of exclusion are easily doled out by young children.

Repeated exclusion can also be a unifying concept for children who are trying to play together. For young children, who are still struggling to coordinate play actions (Parker & Gottman, 1989), the activity of "exclude a peer" is simple and repetitive and so is likely to be successfully executed by a group. In general, repetitive play is less advanced than more sophisticated games such as fantasy play. In fact, repetitive behaviors are more frequently a part of play for younger children and, as children get older and develop more sophisticated play styles, repetitive play decreases (Lender, 1996). This finding suggests that repetitive play would be more easily coordinated amongst children who are just beginning a game or amongst those who are less familiar with each other. Therefore, repetitive exclusion would be a simple unifying activity for children to engage in.

Children may initially exclude a peer for another reason, but if that peer continues to attempt entry in the same way, a pattern of exclusion may develop. In such cases the exclusion eventually occurs simply because a pattern has been established, which sometimes may be a game to the excluders and at other times is the result of one child's oppositional stance against another. In each of these circumstances, the exclusion is carried out for lengthy periods and the pattern of exclusion becomes more important than the original reasons for excluding.

Chapter 9: The Victim's Role in Becoming Excluded

This dissertation is focused on the *excluders*' role in peer exclusion, not the *excludees'*. However, during data analysis, it became apparent that it was not possible to understand why children exclude without looking carefully at the victim's role in his/her own exclusion. In many cases, children who were excluded were engaging in behaviors that made it almost inevitable that they would be excluded. It seemed as if the excluders couldn't help but exclude them—the behavior of the excludee sometimes left them with little choice. I will, therefore, describe specific excludee behaviors that seemed to lead directly to exclusion. In general, those children who were excluded most frequently behaved in ways that contributed to their exclusion. However, there were some children who were repeatedly excluded, even in the absence of obviously difficult behavior at the moment of exclusion. I will describe what may have led to this continuing ostracism as well.

Proximal Excludee Behavior

Sometimes children were extremely persistent in their attempts to enter a game or to have their play ideas accepted. When this persistence continued for too long, or when they asked to play too directly, they tended to be excluded.

Overly persistent, unattractive play suggestions. At times, children behaved in a way that can best be described as simply annoying. Specifically, when children were overly persistent in their attempts to connect with peers, failed to pay attention to social

cues or simply tried to play in ways that were not attractive to the other children, they were commonly excluded.

In the following example, Nathaniel tried repeatedly to enter a game without being accepted.

Example 9.1

((Jayda, Chloe and Mia are playing underneath the playscape slide. They are sitting in the sand and repeatedly closing their eyes. Nathanial watches them from behind a support post of the playscape.))

1 Nathaniel: I'm pee::king!

((He peers around the post.))

2 Nathaniel: (ha ha) I'm peeking.

3 Nathaniel: I'm pee::::king!

4 Nathaniel: I'm pee:king!

(He continues to yell this for three minutes.))

5 Chloe: Watch out for this power.

6 Chloe: Do you want me to turn into a cheetah?

((Nathaniel shakes his head, indicating 'no.'))

7 Chloe: Then stop peeking at us!

((Nathanial climbs up the ladder onto the playscape and continues to look at Chloe, Jayda and Mia from up above. He hangs from a bar over the top of the slide while looking down at them.))

8 Chloe: Stop peeking at us 'cause I know when you're there.

((Nathaniel eventually gets down and moves away.))

Nathaniel's persistence combined with the interruptive nature of his play offers seemed to annoy Chloe, thus causing him to be excluded.

Example 9.2

((Ida and Jayda are running around the yard, giggling and occasionally looking over at Cameron, who is running after them. Cameron begins to work in the sand with Chloe and Alison.))

1 Cameron: I'm sorry, can't help it.

2 Cameron: Oh! It's really getting, I'm really getting' irritated.

((He gets up and chases Jayda.))

3 Cameron: Jayda's bothering me. (1) Guys. (1) I just can't help it.

((Cameron, Chloe and Alison talk to a teacher about how Jayda and Ida are wrecking their sand work and keep coming over to "bother" them. Ida and Jayda have moved to the tire swing. They occasionally look over at Cameron, Chloe and Alison to giggle.))

4 Cameron: There's girly, there's girly girly Ida!

5 Cameron: I'm gonna sho- I'm I'm gonna s- You know what? I'm gonna start defending you 'cause I don't want t- I don't want to be a ( ).

((The children have a number of side conversations, not directly related to this incident.))

6 Cameron: Awesome! Guess what? Hector (.) got Jayda. I already got. I already pulled. I alre- I already got to pull .hh Ida's dress. (.) Isn't that awesome? I'm not ever going to pull your dress.

7 Alison: Yeah.

8 Cameron: You know what I might try to do? If she keeps on bothering me, I'm not e'n gonna invite her to my birthday party.

9 Alison: Who?

10 Cameron: Ida

11 Cameron: Are you gonna invite her to your birthday party?

12 Alison: Why would I?

13 Cameron: Wh- who are you gonna invite to your birthday party?

14 Alison: [(Everything I)

15 Chloe: [I'll invite her to my birthday- I already invite- ( ). Never mind.

16 Cameron: You know what? If you d- ( ) If you don- Don't go to um Ida-

17 Cameron: Hey. Hey, Id-, hey um Alison. If you don't if if she gives you an envelope, don't go to her birthday party. You know why? If you do, you'll have to give her a present. And you don't want to give her a present. Maybe, maybe just give her like a (.) a pirate thing, like for boys. That's gonna be really funny. And that's gonna really get her-

18 Alison: No no no. You don't have to show up with a present.

Because Cameron was so annoyed with Ida, he planned to exclude her from his birthday party, ten months in the future.

Example 9.3

((Hector is playing "droids" with Jude, Liam and Christopher. Jude has told everyone that he is a "good droid."))

1 Hector: Hey Christopher, he's ((Jude)) really a bad droid.

2 Hector: Guys, get Jude! Guys, Jude's. Guy-

((Jude lies on the ground pretending to be dead. Hector pokes Jude to revive him but Jude does not respond. Christopher pushes Hector's arms away then sticks his own arms out towards Hector's chest, indicating "stop." One minute later, Hector initiates a lengthy conversation with Jude about how everyone is forcing him to be "it." When that conversation finally ends, the children begin to run around, starting their game again.))

3 Jude: Hector, you can't cut. Oh, Hector.

((Mia announces that she is selling baked goods and lobsters. Jude runs over, followed by Hector.))

4 Mia: And these are all the muffins. And that is the sweet. And that is beautiful cake. That is a beautiful-

5 Hector: Don't eat any, Jude! It's poisonous!

((Jude and Hector leave that area. Hector chases Jude onto the playscape. Jude continues to move away from Hector and slides down the slide.))

6 Hector: DON'T GO. DON'T GO! JAYDA IS RIGHT BEHIND YOU!

7 Hector: RIGHT THERE! YOU'RE GONNA EAT SOMETHING POISONOUS.

((Jude ignores Hector.))

Hector ignored Jude's play idea (that he was a good droid), insisted that he was being victimized (which did not match my own observations of the incident) and followed Jude around making off-topic suggestions. During this episode, Hector was

highly insistent on his own agenda in a way that seemed to annoy his peers and thus was consistently ignored and excluded.

Offers that are easy to refuse. Certain types of play offers were particularly likely to result in exclusion. For example, when children attempted to enter play very directly by asking permission, their offer was highly likely to be rejected. Also, children's attempts to enter the play that were indirect to the point of obscurity tended to result in exclusion.

Example 9.4

((Jayda and Ida are playing in the cardboard house when Chloe approaches.))

1 Chloe: Can I play with you guys?

2 Ida: No.

Example 9.5

((Emma approaches Asher and Walt.))

1 Emma: Come on Walt and Asher! Let's play!

((Emma walks towards the playscape with Walt and Asher. Zara follows.))

2 Zara: Can I play too?

((No one responds to her.))

Occasionally children were given an affirmative response to their request to join, but were subsequently excluded in a more subtle way.

Example 9.6

((Mikayla and Zara are playing together when Gary approaches.))

1 Zara: Kitty!

2 Gary: Can I play kitties with you?

3 Zara: Yeah. We're just tryin' to catch Mikayla .hh 'cause sh- 'cause [sh she

4 Gary: [RUN

RUN!

((Gary begins to chase Mikayla around but Zara does not follow. After briefly being chased by Gary, Mikayla sits down next to Zara. Gary continues to run around for a minute and then goes to play elsewhere.))

Extremely indirect play offers also seemed to be met with exclusion.

Example 9.7

((Jayda and Ida are on the slide. They are giggling enthusiastically as they have just switched nametags. Chloe walks towards them.))

1 Chloe: ((to Jayda)) Hah? What's yer name?

2 Chloe: Id- Um (.) excuse me, you in the blue, white an:: red and green.

((Jayda does not respond. Chloe walks away.))

A similar problem occurred with play offers that were not fully explained.

Example 9.8

((Gary is on the slide. Mikayla sits down at the top of the other slide. Gary looks over at Mikayla.))

1 Gary: I'M GUN- I'M GOIN WIN! I WIN.

2 Gary: I WIN! I WON!

((Mikayla does not respond. She sits at the top of slide while Gary slides down and gets off at the bottom. She then slides down herself and goes to play elsewhere.))

In each of the above examples the children were refused entry to play, in some because they asked very directly, in others because their attempts to enter were unclear.

General Patterns of Excludee Behavior

A few children in the study were excluded quite frequently, even when they *did* behave appropriately. These children may have been habitually excluded because they commonly behaved in ways that were unappealing to their peers. These children seemed to frequently disregard or were unable to follow common rules of preschool peer culture.

Acting young. Over the course of the study, I observed Gavin being excluded 20 different times. He was vehemently ostracized by his classmates and often became the subject of exclusionary games, even when he was engaged otherwise.

Example 9.9

((Gavin is standing by Elizabeth. He takes her hand. She tries to pull it away.))

1 Gavin: Let's go and play. What you wanna play? I wanna play with you!

((Elizabeth pulls her hand away again. She runs away to where Gabrielle and Lauren are standing. Gavin follows.))

2 Elizabeth: (We don't) ( ).

3 Gavin: Well I wanna play with you.

4 Gavin: I wanna play with- I wanna play with her.

((No one responds to him.))

5 Gavin: R:a:h! (1) Rr:::aa::::h!

((Gabrielle briefly turns away from him but does not say anything. Elizabeth and Gabrielle eventually leave and Gavin continues to follow them.))

The tire swing was a common site of subtle exclusion for Gavin. Even when there was space for one more child, it was almost never for Gavin.

Example 9.10

((Maggie and Gavin run up to the tire swing, where Wilson and Jacob are swinging.))

1	Gavin:	( ) GET ON THE SWING!
2	Maggie:	Nope. I were first.
3	Assistant teacher:	Maggie said ( ) y'all think is fair? Five minutes?
4	Jacob:	No, seven.
5	Wilson:	Seven.
6	Assistant teacher:	Seven minutes, okay?
7	Jacob:	No no no ten.
8	Wilson:	Ten.
9	Assistant teacher:	Seven minutes is fair.

((She helps Maggie get on and Gavin walks away.))

Example 9.11

((Gavin is sitting alone on the tire swing being pushed by an assistant teacher. Gabrielle, Lauren, Susan, Blaine, Lily, and Marianne have all approached. They begin to scream and run away from Gavin.))

Gavin seemed to act younger than his peers in many circumstances. His unbridled enthusiasm, combined with his simplistic level of play seemed to make him a frequent target for exclusion.

Missing cues and playing "wrong." Maggie was also excluded quite frequently. Interestingly, her head teacher was unaware of this. The teacher named Gavin as frequently excluded and rejected by peers, but said that she thought Maggie was a bit neglected but that she was well-liked by the boys in the class. Unfortunately, Maggie was excluded 17 times during the course of our study, 10 of them by the same groups of boys (either Jacob and Wilson or Douglas and Joel). In looking at her behavior, it is very clear why this happened.

Example 9.12

((Gabrielle, Marianne, Elizabeth and Lauren are in the house cooking. Lauren is stirring sand in a bowl. Gabrielle and Marianne both "meow" occasionally.))

1 Gabrielle: We (.) are babies, .hh and we need a owner.

2 Elizabeth: Yeah.

3 Lauren: Yeah.

4 Maggie: Okay. I'll be your owner.

5 Gabrielle: Thanks.

6 Maggie: Good girl! (3) Need an- need any help in the kitchen?

((Gabrielle and Lauren are stirring a bowl of sand. Gabrielle, Lauren, Elizabeth and Marianne, work in the sand and meow.))

7 Gabrielle: ((to Maggie)) Go get your friend!

8 Maggie: I will u:::::h I don't have anyone, huhuhuh.

9 Gabrielle: No::, you have Lily!

10 Maggie: Well, she's playing with Blaine.

11 Maggie: I don't have any other (girl) friends ( ). (1) Lily's playing with Blaine ( ) lililili.

12 Gabrielle: Well go try to find another friend!

13 Elizabeth: Gavin is your friend! He was your friend earlier.

14 Maggie: Gavin is my enemy!!

15 Gabrielle: O::::::::::h!

16 Maggie: But don't tell that to anybody else. (hehehe)

17 Gabrielle: I wi::ll. (hehe)

((Lauren, Elizabeth, Gabrielle and Marianne are carefully sprinkling small amounts of sand on their bowls full of sand and pretending it is sugar. They all tell Maggie that they want help and show her how to carefully add a tiny bit of sugar. Maggie grabs a large handful of sand out of Gabrielle's bowl.))

18 Gabrielle: NO::::! What is wrong with you?

19 Maggie: I don't know. I'm just trying to help you guys.

20 Gabrielle: Thanks! And we don't need an owner.

21 Maggie: Oh, I thought you did, earlier.

((Maggie leaves the house area.))

Example 9.13

((Maggie approaches Joel, Keenan and Douglas who are huddled in a tight group sitting in the sand.))

1 Maggie: Hey. You two made a 'V.'

2 Keenan: A 'V?'

3 Maggie: Yeah. ‘V’

4 Joel: Oh no we didn’t.

5 Maggie: Yeah you did. It looks like one to me.

6 Joel: Leave. Private! Private.

7 Maggie: Neigh. (1) Neigh, neigh.

((Maggie leaves.))

In this case, Maggie approached a very intimate grouping and then initiated a conversation by talking about letter shapes, a subject more commonly addressed with adults than with one’s peers. Even when not being excluded, she commonly talked about things in a way that was atypical for a child her age.

Example 9.14

((Maggie is sitting on the tire swing with Blaine and Gabrielle.))

Maggie: Oh! .hh I wanna show you something (.) different about me. hh .hh Have you ever seen those army socks?

Example 9.15

((Maggie runs up to Lily and Blaine, who are running on the path.))

1 Maggie: He(h)y! Gotcha!

2 Maggie: Gotcha, Lily!

3 Lily: We are not playing ( ) tag.

((Maggie chases Lily, who runs away. Maggie climbs up onto the playscape and runs around the yard for one minute.))

4 Maggie: Wilson! You are hilarious!

5 Maggie: Hey! Oh! I know what that is. A horse.

6 Lily: Yeah. I know.

7 Maggie: ‘Cause you love horses!

8 Maggie: ((in a singsong voice)) HEY GUYS! HEY HEY. WHAT’CHA SAY TODAY?

((Blaine and Lily do not respond.))

8 Maggie: Neigh! Neigh! Neigh.

From the above examples, it is possible to see that Maggie was not working with the same set of social rules as the other children. She was persistent even when rejected and frequently tried to enter tight in-groups. She often made disconnected comments, brought up subjects that only seemed to interest her or chatted in a way more appropriate to conversation with adults. She also did not really seem to pay attention to play cues or back off when she was not welcomed. Both Maggie and Gavin’s behaviors were typical of children who were frequently excluded.

Discussion

Children who behave differently or engage in undesirable play behaviors tend to be excluded. The aforementioned examples show that being overly insistent or asking too directly for entry often leads to exclusion. In addition, approaches that are too timid may also be met with rejection. Children who seem younger than their peers, those who do not understand the rules of peer culture (or choose not to follow them) or who are extremely different for other reasons may also be repeatedly excluded.

It was particularly interesting that direct requests to join ("Can I play?") were almost always met with exclusion. We recorded data on a child asking another if they could play a total of 29 times. But in only *four* of them was their entry successful. As mentioned previously, according to Conversation Analysis (CA) theory, refusal is a dispreferred response (Nofsinger, 1991). Therefore, when a person asks a question requesting something (in this case, to be able to play), it is simplest to answer it in the affirmative and allow them in (Kitzinger & Frith, 2001). When an adult issues an invitation to another adult, it is either accepted or an explanation is given for refusal (Nosfinger, 1991). But Goodwin and Goodwin (1987) found that when *children* oppose one another, they do so very directly and without excusing themselves. "The shape of these disagreements is such that they do not delay or disguise the alignment a participant is taking up with respect to a prior move but instead emphasize opposition" (p. 207).

But why this particular request ("can I play") almost always met with opposition was unclear. I considered the possibility that these children were still being socialized into linguistic norms and so had not yet fully adopted all of the rules of the dominant (adult) culture. Because young children are still egocentric, they might be likely to respond to requests in ways that are in line with their own desires, rather than with cultural norms (Ervin-Tripp, 1982; Piaget, 1926). It also seemed possible that these children were purposefully resisting behavior typical of the dominant adult culture. Lofdahl and Hagglund (2006) demonstrated that preschool children resisted adult rules regarding mandatory inclusion ("anyone can play") by subtly circumventing them: claiming a peer was "too small," or that they were "not playing that anymore."

However, it eventually became apparent that these requests to play were most likely refused because of the nature of the question as well as who was doing the asking. Children are likely to ask for permission (e.g., "Can I play?") when they do not expect the other person to acquiesce (Gordon & Ervin-Tripp, 1984). In fact Petty (1993), in her work on preschoolers' entry strategies, suggested that children were most successful in gaining entrance when making clear statements or commands. In line with this, Ervin-Tripp found "the most polite requests were the least successful (1982, p. 239). Interestingly, polite requests are most commonly used with dominant partners (in their research this referred to adults; Ervin-Tripp). Further analysis of my own data revealed a similar pattern. When children asked to play and were refused, 90% of the time the child who requested entry was less powerful (according to my sociometric assessments) than the child who subsequently refused them entry[12]. In only three cases was entry refused when the exclud*ee* was more powerful than the exclud*er.* Therefore, it appears that lower status children who ask to play are almost inevitably refused entry.

When children make unclear play offers (or very direct play requests), they may also be refused because their behavior does not adhere to standard patterns of play escalation (Robinson, Anderson, Porter, Hart & Wouden-Miller, 2003). Children are most successful in entering play with a peer when they move through a sequence of behaviors that gradually escalate the level of interaction to ultimately reach cooperative play (Dodge, Schlundt, Schocken & Delugach, 1983). The most successful entries occur

[12] Those four instances where the newcomer *was* accepted after asking directly to play were disparate. There was no consistent pattern of power relationships between the entering child and the peer who accepted them.

when a child begins by watching, moves to playing next to a peer, and then slowly begins to interact until the two (or more) children are engaged in a cooperative activity (Robinson, et al.). Dodge et al. similarly note that successful group entry tends to have three primary stages: observing (the group's play), imitating (the play behaviors of the group), and talking (either making requests of the group or statements that are play-relevant). Therefore, when children either ask to play too directly or make an obscure verbal bid, they are not following this pattern of play escalation.

Kantor, Elgas and Fernie (1993) studied the behavior of a child who was frequently excluded. He was "somewhat rigid and inflexible in his participation strategies (using the same theme and language to participate in all play episodes" (p. 141), "he adopted roles appropriate to the group only 29% of the time and used appropriate language even less frequently (10%)" (p. 139), and "most of all, William never g(ave) up; he never read the cues of his peers who (were) clearly not interested in his bids" (p. 139). "William saw only the surface-level demands. He seemed unable to take the perspective of others, to predict their responses appropriately, to adapt his behavior to shifting standards, or to negotiate common meanings with the core group in play" (p. 140). William's behavior was quite similar to those children in my research who were frequently excluded.

Peer rejection, of which exclusion is a significant subset, serves an important function as an effective socialization agent (Asher, Rose & Gabriel, 2001). A number of studies have demonstrated that preschoolers will exclude, or threaten to exclude, any child who does not comply with group rules or exhibit desired behaviors (Arnold, et al.,

1999; Lofdahl & Hagglund, 2006). And older children are also sanctioned and excluded for inappropriate behavior, which may help to induce behavioral conformity (Goodwin, 2002, 2006). Therefore, when exclusion occurs as a result of children's inappropriate behavior (e.g., ignoring social cues, being overly persistent) it may be an attempt to maintain order in a peer group by ensuring that the child behaves more appropriately in the future (as described in the literature review, Chapter 2).

Interestingly Gavin did not quite fit this profile; he *did* seem to be paying attention to other children's cues and play behaviors. He typically gave up quite quickly when a bid to play was not accepted, he rarely made irrelevant offers and he did not attempt to change the game when entering. Gavin was impulsive, enthusiastic, innocent, gullible and gentle. Although Gavin was just two months below the mean age in his classroom (which was 4 years and 11 months), I suspected that Gavin's behavior was more typical of a younger preschooler and that he was being excluded because he could not communicate and play at the same level as his classmates. Lofdahl and Hagglund (2006) described a similar circumstance when one girl was repeatedly excluded in her classroom because she was slightly younger than her peers.

To try to understand whether Gavin was, in fact, behaving as if he were younger, I analyzed Gavin's language usage. Using a linguistics program, CLAN (Computerized Language ANalysis; a part of the CHILDES project), I assessed his Mean Length of Utterance (MLU) and conducted Developmental Sentence Analysis (using a procedure called Developmental Sentence Scoring or DSS) which are typically used to assess the development of children's language (Harris, 1990; Ryan 2000). For normally developing

five-year-olds the mean MLU (i.e., how many words they typically say at a time) is 5.63 (with a range of 4.44-6.82; Harris). Gavin's MLU was 4.2, just below the normal range for children at five. As he would not yet turn five for three more months, he could probably be considered within the normal range, although at the lower end. DSS assesses the linguistic complexity of utterances by looking for different types of sentence structures. Gavin's DSS score was well below average. For 4 ½ year olds (rates for five-year-olds were not available), the mean score is 8.04 and the 75th percentile is 9.1 (Ryan). Gage scored 5.61. This demonstrates that Gavin was, at least linguistically, developmentally behind his peers, which may have contributed to his frequent exclusion.

In sum, the behavior that children exhibit with their peers has tremendous impact on whether they are excluded during play. Those who do not follow social rules, are too persistent or do not take cues, as well as those who act younger are likely to be excluded.

Chapter 10: Creation of an Exclusion-Friendly Peer Dynamic

In trying to understand why children exclude, I realized that exclusion was much more prevalent in some groups than in others. It would appear that, in such cases, there was an exclusionary dynamic that encouraged exclusion. This seemed to be a very important cause of exclusion but was one that was particularly difficult to isolate.

Fighting for a Friend

As mentioned frequently in previous chapters of this work, Chloe and Ida competed for the friendship of Jayda. This dynamic led to frequent exclusion, primarily on the part of Ida, who seemed unwilling to play with Chloe, but also resulted in Chloe and Jayda excluding quite frequently as well. Ida often excluded Chloe to prevent her from usurping Jayda's friendship.

Example 10.1

((Ida points at Chloe.))

1 Ida: Yeah we're not playing with you today, so.

((Ida starts to run away with Jayda accompanying her. Chloe follows them.))

And Jayda commonly excluded Chloe to make Ida happy.

Example 10.2

((Jayda and Ida are at the top of the slides. Alison is below them and asks Chloe if she is playing with Jayda and Ida.[13]))

1 Jayda: We're not playing with you.

[13] Because this is the very beginning of an observation, it is not captured on the recording.

2 Chloe: Oh! That's what I thought in the first place, but .hh when Alison asked me that question, I was like, (.) I'm confused.

((Chloe skips away, humming to herself and begins to pick tiny flowers in the grass.))

As a result of this dynamic, Chloe was the most frequently excluded child in the study (24 times), with 15 exclusions by Ida (one in conjunction with Jayda), six by Jayda alone and three by Nathan (two of those involved Jayda as an excluder as well). This dynamic was also responsible for Jayda being the most frequent "bystander" in the study. In other words, she was present but did not participate in 22 different instances of exclusion, many of them related to the Ida-Jayda-Chloe dynamic. Ida excluded 18 times and so was the second highest excluder in the study. All but two of these incidents were directed at Chloe.

I was able to interview all three of these children in depth about their relationships with each other and all seemed eager (in their own ways) to talk about the exclusionary dynamic. More complete transcripts of these interviews are available in Appendix C. Chloe explained the social dynamic between the three in a very coherent way that made it clear she had thought about it at great length. She was very candid with me and worked hard to describe the situation clearly and in detail.

Example 10.3

((I ask Chloe who she most likes to play with.))

1 Chloe: Mm::: Jayda?

2 Suzanne: Mm hmm.

3 Chloe: Mia?

4 Suzanne: Mm hmm.

5 Chloe: And.

6 Suzanne: Hmm, tricky ‘cause you have to look through all of them. If you had to choose who would be your three favorite?

7 Chloe: I only huh really have like two favorite.

((turns omitted))

((We begin talking about her play with Jayda and Ida.))

8 Suzanne: And I was curious about that. So. Do you like playing with Jayda and Ida the same amount or one more than the other or [are you be-

9 Chloe: [Jayda more that Ida, ‘cause sometimes Ida is a little (1) not (.5) we have lots of prob::lems.

((turns omitted))

10 Chloe: If (.) the badder and (.) sometimes when Jayda says she’s playing with me, Ida says (.) thinks we should all be together but and when Jayda wants to play with Ida, she wants <u>just</u> Jayda to play with her.

((turns omitted))

((I ask why she and Ida encounter so many problems when they play.))

11 Chloe: I think because she likes <u>Jayda</u> a lot and she wants to <u>play</u> with her <u>every single day.</u>

((turns omitted))

12 Chloe: And sometimes she even wants to play by herself, .hh <u>if</u> me and Jayda are playing together.

13 Suzanne: Oh really.

14 Chloe: That's how much she likes Jayda. She just wants her all to herself sometimes.

((turns omitted))

((I ask why Chloe thinks Ida has a difficult time playing with her *and* Jayda.))

15 Chloe: ºYeah I think so:: because I bet I (.5) that's its kind of the same problem with me? 'Cause (.) with doing games?º I think I'm the only one who .hh mostly (.) I used to think (.) I'm the one who like gets to choose 'cause my sister has Down's Syndrome? and she doesn't really play: or think of games for us to play .hh so we don't have very much (.) I (.) very much, ummm compromising lessons .hh so

((turns omitted))

16 Chloe: They might think they're the one who gets to choose and I might think I'm the one! and that's the only problem and Jay- and Ida probably plays by herself 'cause .hh Andrea 'cause her sister is pretty t .hh pretty little

((turns omitted))

17 Chloe: Yeah so it's really what I do at home that matters, with my whole thing!

((turns omitted))

18 Chloe: So. Sometimes when I feel really really sad and I don't have anyone to play with, I just (.5) go to the bushes and just stay there for the rest of outside time.

19 Suzanne: Oh my goodness, that sounds like it must not feel very good! That's very hard.

20 Chloe: Yeah! It's very hard for me .hh to. And it's very hard for Ida to let me get in the game with Jayda already playing with her 'cause she likes her so much and she (.) and she kind of does these words out of her mouth that (1) aren't (.5) as (2) good. She sometimes she says. Sometimes she says, .hh "No Jayda I don't want to. .hh No, Chloe I don't want to play with you." And sometimes she says that and I'm just like, okay I'm walking away. Right now.

((turns omitted))

21 Chloe: Actually? Sometimes I get in the game just (.) I actually just play the game with Jayda and Ida quits even.

It was evident that Jayda had *also* thought through her dilemma in detail. She demonstrated a good deal of emotion when describing the social dynamics of this group and it was clear that she was struggling with the situation. To explain her feelings, she even described a scenario in which Sara (a research assistant) and I were in a parallel situation.

Example 10.4

((I ask Jayda whom she most likes to play with.))

1 Jayda: I like to play with () Chloe? And where's Id-? Ida and Jayda.

((turns omitted))

2 Suzanne: And what about, is there anyone that you'd rather not play with sometimes?

((Jayda points to Ida)).

((turns omitted))

((Jayda has been talking about how it hurts her feelings when Ida calls her "poo poo."))

3 Jayda: Uh yeah. And she als- she cries <u>every day</u> when I play with her? Because .hh she (.) really (.) doesn't ºlike Chloe and I really like Chloe?º

4 Suzanne: And you really like Chloe?

5 Jayda: Yeah and then she and then 'cause she makes <u>me</u> play with <u>her</u> a lot. And so, I played with her <u>a lot</u> and then I played with .hh Chloe:.

((turns omitted))

6 Jayda: You wouldn't play with them if you ca- if somebody called <u>you</u> poo-poo. 'Cause like what would happen if your friend <u>Sara</u> ((a research assistant)), and you were playing with a <u>different</u> gir- girl and you were <u>her</u> friend and Sara maked you play with her. And then when it's you were playing with her Sara sa- called you poo-poo. How would you feel?

((turns omitted))

7 Jayda: Well, if you play with Sara she won't call you poo-poo. She will just be happy and she'll say, "<u>Come on, come on</u>!"

((turns omitted))

8 Suzanne: Why does it make her ((Ida)) sad if you play with other people? Does that make Chloe sad too or not as much?

9 Jayda: Not as much. She says, "okay," but she just says, "just make sure you don't play with her a lot. Make sure you play with me sometimes and them sometimes. That's what Chloe says and that's true.

((turns omitted))

((The conversation has turned to why Chloe and Ida behave so differently in regards to playing with each other.))

10 Jayda: Right? So:: I like .hh these two are different people and they're and then Ida really doesn't know about her.

((Jayda points to pictures of Chloe and Ida as she is saying this.))

((turns omitted))

((I ask her what would happen if Ida *did* know Chloe well.))

11 Jayda: Then she will: and then she will, then (.) she won't whine about it and then she maybe won't call me poo-poo.

12 Suzanne: Because she would want to play with Chloe then or what?

13 Jayda: She will want to play with her 'cause she (.) like. What would happen if Sara only likeded you and you only likeded Sara?

14 Suzanne: Oh. It would just be the two of us, huh, and nobody else? But if Sara and I both liked another person we could all play together?

15 Jayda: Well how 'bout if you if you just didn't like'd Sara, and Sara likeded you, but you didn't like'd nobody. That would be a (bit) terrible.

It is particularly interesting to note here that Jayda listed Ida as both someone she liked to play with and someone she did not. And she also hinted at not actually liking Ida when she asked me "What if you just didn't like'd Sara?"

Ida provided a very different story than the other two. She was gossipy, chirrupy and friendly throughout the conversation, quite different from her usual demeanor around me, which was either extremely silly or quite brusque.

Example 10.5

1 Suzanne: I was wondering if you could show me who are three kids that you really like to play with or would really like to play with?

2 Ida: Hm hm hm! Mhmhmh! (ha ha ha) I like! (.) I like these th-

((She points to pictures of Jayda, Mia and Chloe on the table.))

3 Suzanne: Jayda? Ah. And Mia? Uh huh. And Chloe? Oh okay.

4 Ida: And may- and (.5) and. Me!

((turns omitted))

5 Suzanne: Who is your favorite person of those to play with?

6 Ida: Um::: um: Jay:da.

7 Suzanne: Oh. And who's your second favorite?

8 Ida: Um. Chloe

((turns omitted))

9 Suzanne: And is there anyone in your class who are kind of the leaders of the class, like if they have an idea when you are playing, [then their idea gets done?

10 Ida: [Well:, it's somebody that I like to play with.

11 Suzanne: Hmmm.

12 Ida: It's Chloe!

13 Suzanne: Oh!

14 Ida: Chloe's the leader!

((turns omitted))

15 Ida: Well: do you know who I plays with most?

16 Suzanne: Who?

17 Ida: Hah hah! Jayda and Chloe an::d Mia.

18 Suzanne: Oh. Do you play with them all together or different at different times?

19 Ida: Well: I just made new friends with Chloe an and Mia, an and Jayda, so I am playing with them a lot now.

20 Suzanne: Oh.

21 Ida: I just started tomorrow.

22 Suzanne: You just started tomorrow? Wow. Did something change that you made friends with them?

23 Ida: Mmhm.

24 Suzanne: What changed?

25 Ida: Um::: It changed because in the morning I said, "I <u>can</u> play with Chloe." And then, and then Mia comes up and say, "Can I play with you guys?" And then I said, "Okay," and then we played together and then I [made friends.

26 Suzanne: [And how did it go when you played with all of them?

27 Ida: Good!

((turns omitted))

((Ida describes how to solve a problem by making sure each person has a turn to decide the game. She then veers off to talk about dog poop before returning to her friends.))

28 Ida: So the:n I was a lil little happy. But (.) I didn't like when Jayda said, "Jayda oh I ah aks we." Jayda and me accidently said <u>bad</u> things. And and Chloe. But I didn't <u>care</u> about because I <u>like</u> playing by myself <u>sometimes.</u>

29 Suzanne: You do? Do you feel lonely when you play by yourself?

30 Ida: No.

((turns omitted))

31 Ida: Huh huh huh. I am switching.

((Ida is rearranging the photos of herself, Chloe, Jayda and Mia on the table.))

32 Suzanne: Ah. You're switching.

33 Ida: And that one goes right there.

34 Suzanne: Mm:

35 Ida: (And this one. And)

36 Suzanne: I see that you're next to Jayda now and then Chloe is next to Jayda and then Mia is next to Chloe. So you're all in a row, but you're on this end, huh? And then Jayda's kind of in the middle there. Next to you and Chloe.

((turns omitted))

37 Suzanne: Oh so everybody likes Jayda? And does Chloe like you too?

38 Ida: Uh huh. I think. (She said just) a little bit. ( ) She mostly just cares about Jayda.

39 Suzanne: Really? She just cares about Jayda?

40 Ida: (Yeah.)

41 Suzanne: Oh my goodness. How do you know that? Like how can you tell that about her?

42 Ida: Becau:se she doesn't play with me a lot?

43 Suzanne: She doesn't play with you a lot?

44 Ida: And she just believes (.) Jayda?

((turns omitted))

45 Ida: Yes, but now we're having (.) fun together.

Although I was unaware of any recent changes in the group dynamic, Ida had concluded their previous struggles and created a happy ending to the problem, possibly for my benefit. Ida's story was a much happier, simpler one than either Jayda's or Chloe's.

The interviews describe the very difficult social dynamic in which Ida, Chloe and Jayda were involved. Ida was unwilling to play with Chloe and only wanted to play with Jayda. Jayda was unwilling to hurt Ida's feelings but wanted to play with Chloe. Finally,

Chloe wanted to play with Jayda and was willing to include Ida to do so. The combination of Ida's refusal to play with Chloe and Jayda's attempts to protect Ida created a social dynamic that necessitated frequent usage of exclusion.

A Powerful Exclusionary Force

In one of the classrooms, there was a set of female triplets (Elizabeth, Lauren and Susan) who had a significant impact on the group's social dynamics. The uniqueness of their situation seemed to give the triplets a good deal of power (even the other parents seemed fascinated by them) and almost all group play amongst the eight girls in that class revolved around one or more of them. Although the teachers were very conscious of treating them as individuals and strongly encouraged their peers do so as well, the other children still seemed to think of them as "the triplets." Lily even referred to them that way in person ("Hey triplets. I moved in a new house!"). Gabrielle refused to have anyone *but* "the triplets" over for a play date. And Marianne? According to Gabrielle, "all (she does) is make stuff for the triplets." As a result of their powerful and unique status in the class, the other girls seemed highly desirous of their attention and play time. In fact, Elizabeth, Lauren and Susan were the most frequent bystanders in the study, after Jayda. Lauren was present, but did not participate in, 16 incidents of exclusion (commonly when Blaine and Gabrielle were vying for her attention) and Lauren and Elizabeth were both present for 12 exclusion incidents. Because the other girls in the class were in competition for the triplets' attention and play time, a great deal of exclusion was used to accomplish these goals.

Within this threesome, Lauren may have been the most powerful. She was central to much of the exclusionary behavior in her classroom as she was the second most frequent bystander and the third most frequent excluder in the entire study. In fact, Lauren excluded her peers 17 times in the course of the study while she was only once the victim of exclusion. Lauren's occasional exclusion of her sisters (Example 6.19) and the detached manner with which she seemed to exclude and then suddenly include her peers (Example 6.18) also indicated that she was quite powerful. Although the children were pleased to play with any of the triplets, it seemed like many of them *really* preferred Lauren.

Example 10.6

((Gabrielle approaches Elizabeth under the tunnel.))

1 Gabrielle: Where's your Lauren?

Example 10.7

((Susan, Gabrielle, Marianne, Gavin and Elizabeth are standing under the playscape bridge. Susan is talking about her cousins.))

1 Susan: It's a he [and he's seven.

2 Gabrielle: [ANYBODY SEEN LAUREN?

3 Susan: And um um:

4 Gabrielle: ANYBODY SEEN LAUREN?

5 Susan: Shh::::::

6 Marianne: We've got to get Lauren!

7 Susan: Sh:::

8 Marianne: We've got to get Lauren!

((Susan, Gabrielle and Elizabeth do not respond or acknowledge. Susan eventually sticks out her arm towards Marianne.))

As previously described, Blaine and Gabrielle were in fierce competition for the triplet's (and in particular, Lauren's) attention (Example 7.15). In the course of this competition, they tried to keep other potential playmates away from Lauren, Elizabeth or Susan.

Example 10.8

1 Lauren: Marianne's coming to our house. Do you wanna play with Marianne?

2 Susan: She's coming to our house!

3 Blaine: I know, but that doesn't mean you get to play with her.

4 Susan: I'm playing with Gabrielle right now!

5 Blaine: I know, but that doesn't mean that you can play with her. Well, whenever I have a playdate, I don't play with someone that I'm going to have a playdate.

6 Blaine: ((to Lauren)) °D'you wanna play with me?°

((Blaine takes Lauren's hand and PULLS her away. Lauren resists but then follows. Susan follows them.))

Lauren was an extremely powerful child who was involved, in some way or another, with a great deal of the exclusion in her classroom. But it may have been simply the presence of *triplets* in a preschool classroom that most dramatically impacted rates of exclusion. Exclusion amongst this group may have been frequent because the girls were

so motivated to play with the triplets that they made more entry attempts to ongoing large group play. Another possibility was that any child who succeeded in gaining access to the triplets was willing to vehemently defend their play from interlopers.

Discussion

I have described two social dynamics resulting in frequent exclusion. For an exclusionary dynamic like this to occur amongst a peer group, *two* important factors must be present: 1) A peer (or group of peers) who is sought-after as a friend by at least two different children and 2) at least one child who tends to use manipulative control or needs power with their peers. In the Pre-K classroom, both Chloe and Ida really wanted to play with Jayda each day. Jayda was skilled at following other's leads in play, she was able to be silly and fun, and she rarely got visibly upset or angry. There were only two other girls in their class: Alison, who preferred to play with boys and was vehemently against girlie-girls ("I started not liking princesses when I turned six.") and Mia, who was not a skilled player, acted very young and frequently informed teachers of her peers' minor rule infractions. Although Chloe did say that she liked Mia, she also excluded her six times over the course of the study, indicating that she may have had mixed feelings about the relationship. Because children tend to affiliate with those who share similar interests as well as those who are skilled players (Gottman, 1983), Jayda was the best choice of playmate for both Ida and Chloe.

In the other classroom, Lauren, Susan and Elizabeth were a highly desired social commodity. The novelty and drama of triplets was so attractive that each day, Blaine, Gabrielle, Marianne, Lily, Gavin and sometimes even Maggie and Jacob tried to play

with them. Popularity, particularly for girls, has been positively associated with social visibility and physical attractiveness (Lease, Kennedy & Axelrod, 2002). Three identical, blond, female triplets are likely to be visually striking and difficult to ignore, which may have contributed significantly to their desirability with peers.

As to the second important factor in creating an exclusionary social dynamic, the primary competitors for these desirable playmates exhibited behaviors distinct from many of their peers. Ida was highly relationally manipulative, as was evident in the way she successfully controlled Jayda's interactions with Chloe (Examples 7.21, 7.22, 8.17). Blaine behaved similarly as she regularly used deception and subtle force to influence the triplets' play choices (Example 7.15). And, as described in the discussion section of Chapter 4, Gabrielle appeared to have a need for power and control in her school environment. Ida, Blaine and Gabrielle attempted to control their peers and play environment more than was typical for most children.

Such children are likely to use powerful or manipulative exclusion to gain access to their desired playmate(s). The frequency with which they exclude may then cause exclusionary methods of handling social problems to become commonplace. Some children may see others excluding and so believe it is appropriate, common and an ingrained part of the peer culture, causing them to emulate it. Or children may see their peers solving social problems by excluding and so learn that it is likely to be a successful strategy. Whatever the cause, once exclusion is common in a particular social environment, it seems to feed on itself. Children may respond to exclusion with even more exclusion.

Preschool peer cultures are, in some ways, universal. There are similar games played, themes addressed and types of communication used worldwide (Corsaro, 2003). However, any group of people who spend a good deal of time together will develop a unique way of interacting and being (Williams, 2001). Because of this, even individual classrooms within the same school have their own "life world" (Elgas, 1988). There are particular rules of communication that typically govern social interactions (e.g., not interrupting a speaker; Nosfinger, 1991), but individual groups develop individual interaction styles (Williams). To engage in successful social interactions with peers, children must understand and utilize the nuances and accepted behaviors within these individual small group "cultures" (Kantor, Elgas & Fernie, 1993).

Classroom groups are, therefore, likely to be quite unique in their frequency and methods of excluding peers. Although this has not been directly studied, Corsaro noted that, although exclusion seems to be common in American, white, middle-class preschools, it is less so amongst other cultural groups, such as Italian nursery school children (2005). He suggests that the Italian children are more comfortable with the group debates and discussions necessary for large group play than the American children, who are less at ease with opposition and conflict. This discomfort may cause the Americans to avoid the negotiations and debates entailed in successful large group play by using exclusion. Although Corsaro is referring to two different cultures, even within the same school, individual classrooms are likely to be distinct in the way that exclusion is utilized.

PART IV: GENERAL DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

Chapter 11: Discussion

Summary of Findings

This work has highlighted a myriad of reasons that young children might exclude their peers from play. Exclusion may be related to (1) the excluder's own needs for power or control; (2) the context of exclusion as it relates to materials/space constraints, ongoing play or patterns of behavior; (3) specific relationships or the dynamics of the peer group and/or (4) the excludee's behavior. Finally, (5) the social culture of a specific peer group may detract from or encourage usage of exclusion. Quite often, exclusion occurs for a combination of reasons. For example, a child excluded to prevent interruption of the ongoing play of two close friends is an unskilled player. In many cases, it is not possible to know with complete certainty why the exclusion occurred, but it is usually possible to interpret children's motivations based on the circumstances and the children's past behavior.

In my review of current literature (Chapter 2), one suggested cause of peer exclusion was an *intent to harm* the excludee. This line of reasoning originates from a view of peer exclusion as a form of social aggression (Underwood, 2003) because a primary definition of aggression is an action intended to harm another (Bushman & Anderson, 2001). However, only a few incidents seemed to be primarily enacted to hurt a peer; in particular those incidents that may have been intended as revenge (Example 6.17). But as revenge is known to be a method of protecting threatened psychological

needs (Jones, 2010), and aggression is often enacted, in part, as a form of protection (Archer, 2009), the distinctions between exclusionary behaviors motivated by self-protection, revenge or intent to harm are quite difficult to discern. Therefore, I would suggest that exclusion may sometimes be an act of social aggression with intent to harm but that it more commonly occurs for a myriad of other reasons. In the literature review, I had also noted some research suggesting that exclusion may be occasionally enacted to avoid more overt conflict (Corsaro, 2003). However, in my own research I did not encounter any exclusion that was clearly enacted for these purposes.

Future Research

It was beyond the scope of this study to examine the myriad of external factors that are likely to contribute to children' usage of exclusion. However future research should look at a wide variety of possibilities to determine other influences on young children's exclusionary behavior. For example, it seemed that Gavin was excluded frequently because he acted younger than his peers and a cursory analysis revealed that there was, indeed, a developmental difference in his language usage (which appeared to be delayed). However, I was unable to formally assess children's language or social cognitive development to determine how it might have impacted their usage of or victimization from exclusion. Therefore, future studies should seek to understand how individual differences in development, language, social understanding and physical abilities impact usage of or victimization from exclusion.

In addition, children's exclusionary behavior was likely influenced by family factors. For example, Gabrielle was known to have a difficult relationship with her older

siblings. It is possible that she was excluded by them or that she witnessed them excluding others. By making exclusion a viable social choice, they may have impacted how frequently she excluded her peers at school. Similarly, if one of the frequent excluders in our study observed their parents ostracizing or excluding their own peers, spouses or other family members, that could influence whether the child excluded their peers at school. Although such home-school correlations with peer exclusion have never been studied, there have been studies of social aggression that are similar. Socially aggressive children are more likely to have socially aggressive parents as well as parents who do not view social aggression as a rule violation (i.e., they think it is an acceptable behavior; Werner, 2006). Therefore, future work should examine the family's exclusion and manipulation-related behaviors. This connection could be assessed through direct observations of family interactions, as well as through parent and child interviews. In addition children's attachment status should also be considered important to understanding the usage of exclusion. Zadro (2005) found that those who were insecure avoidant were more likely to ostracize others, and those who were insecure ambivalent were more likely to be excluded, themselves. Therefore, understanding the parent-child bond may be crucial for determining what causes a particular child to exclude with great frequency.

Future work should also assess how exclusion changes over the course of development. Although my work is useful in understanding why children exclude during early childhood, it does not explain exclusion during later childhood or adolescence. Because the primary social concerns of children change with their developmental stage

(Parker & Gottman, 1989), their reasons for excluding peers are likely to change as well. Therefore, similar research should be conducted on older children to determine whether reasons for exclusion alter with developmental stage. In addition, it is possible that there is a correlation between young children's usage of peer exclusion and later usage of exclusion and/or social aggression. Therefore, future work could assess the longitudinal relationship between peer exclusion and social aggression throughout development. Because my research suggested that there were a few children who used exclusion with great frequency and who also seemed to be particularly socially manipulative, it is possible that these children would continue their deception and manipulation in later childhood through behaviors such as rumor-spreading or manipulating a friendship (forms of social aggression).

Finally, future observational research on exclusion should utilize "member checking" (Lofland, et al., 2006) through "indefinite triangulation" (Cicourel, 1975; Corsaro, 1985) to further enhance validity. To do so, researchers could ask the subjects to explain their own past exclusionary behavior. Corsaro (1985) showed his subjects videotapes of their play with peers and asked them to describe what they were thinking and feeling when they did certain things with their peers. A similar method could be employed to directly ask the children why they excluded their peers at particular moments. It is not easy for preschoolers to reflect carefully on past events, but my interviews with Chloe and Jayda suggest that there are some children who would be willing and able to talk about their motivations for exclusion.

Real-World Applications

A few years ago I spoke with a graduate student who was considered an experienced and skilled teacher at the laboratory school where my research took place. When I spoke to her about my work on exclusion, she related a recent occurrence in her classroom. Two children were playing together when a third approached. Although the interloper was a frequent playmate of one of the children, on this occasion, she was told "You're not my friend today" and excluded from the play. The teacher admitted that she had not known how to handle the situation and so her only response had been to help the excluded child find other playmates. She then mentioned her own relief when the child was again included on the following day. She also suggested that because the situation had dissipated, the outcome was satisfactory. She told me that she did not know how to respond appropriately to exclusionary behavior or whether this was even something that a teacher *should* become involved with. This conversation was similar to many I have had with parents of young children in the past ten years. They have echoed her lack of strategy and unease with exclusion.

It seems that teachers and parents are often unsure of how to handle peer exclusion. Because exclusion is so common during young children's play, an appropriate response to this potentially harmful behavior is extremely important. And because the causes of exclusion are so disparate, an incident of exclusion absolutely cannot be addressed appropriately without understanding why it occurred. For example, when a child is excluded because they are extremely difficult to play with (e.g., Maggie), the problem should be addressed very differently from when a child excludes their peers

because they seem to have a deep need for power or control (e.g., Ida). Without this knowledge about motivation, inappropriate responses can and do abound. This suggests that sharing information about the causes of exclusion, as well as teaching others to recognize them, would be extremely helpful for parents and teachers and, in the end, be highly beneficial to children.

In addition, this work points to certain social skills that are important for young children to possess. Adults can help young children:

1. Learn to use gradual entry techniques (Dodge et al., 1983). Children should begin by observing others' play to learn about the game. After playing alongside their peers and imitating play behaviors, they can talk about the play, either to demonstrate involvement (for example, "I'm baking muffins") or to request something (e.g., Pass me a spoon).
2. Understand the importance of a flexible agenda. Help children learn that if they want to enter ongoing play, they must agree to abide by previously established rules.
3. Wait for an appropriate opening before making a verbal entry bid. Do not talk when another child is in the midst of speaking or while a play sequence is ongoing.
4. Pay attention to other children's cues and reactions. Adults can help children learn to interpret disinterest, refusal and acceptance. They can also help children to observe and assess ongoing play to learn what game is being played, who is

playing and what role they could take when entering the play (e.g., If children are pretending to be zoo animals, they might need a zookeeper or an elephant.)

5. Try a different strategy when the first one doesn't work. Children should learn to step away and begin again with a different (and typically more gradual) entry if their first attempt is rebuffed.
6. Learn to "share the lead" when playing with peers. As children who always insisted on their own agendas were often excluded, being able to follow another's lead is paramount. In addition, a child who *never* offers suggestions of their own makes it difficult for their peers to engage in high level, cooperative play. Therefore, children should learn to be both leaders and followers in their ongoing play with peers.

Adults can also help to create an environment that will minimize exclusion by doing their own work.

1. Observe children during free play and learn to understand the social dynamics in the group. It is important for adults (including parents) to know who is powerful, excluded, a skilled player or having trouble within the peer group.
2. Understand individual children's needs for power and control. If a child seems particularly interested in controlling others, help them to find appropriate outlets for feeling powerful and pay careful attention to their power dynamics with peers.
3. Take an active role in dismantling any exclusionary dynamics that occur. If a recurring, harmful pattern forms, adults should take strong steps to change it. Ask children to take a break from their current play group and help both excluders and

excludees find new playmates. Set up play experiences with peers of equal power and encourage children to form ongoing relationships with these "equals."

4. When children are forming a relationship or beginning to play together, they may need help to find commonalities that are not exclusionary.
5. Do not institute blanket rules like "anyone can join" or "you can't say you can't play." This will only encourage children to use less direct methods of excluding their peers, thus making it more difficult to detect and manage.
6. Be present to ensure that, when a new player is included, the play does not disintegrate or become less productive and fun. This may mean joining the play or actively supporting less skilled players.
7. Be aware of manipulation and take steps to discourage it.
8. Support the excluders. As there is often a perfectly legitimate reason that exclusion is occurring, it is inappropriate to always side with the excludee.

There is much work still to be done before fully understanding all of the factors that influence exclusion. Exclusion amongst young children is highly normative and occurs quite frequently. It is sometimes, but not always, harmful for the excludee and can, at times, negatively impact group social dynamics. Unfortunately, many adults have difficulty understanding both why the exclusion occurred and how to address it. Because exclusion is both common and difficult for adults to understand, it is important that this information be available to parents, teachers and clinicians.

Appendix A: List of Study Participants

Pre-K Class

Alison: Not a subject of direct observations.

Cameron: Disliked by classmates. Mutual dislike with Ida.

Chloe: Part of Jayda-Ida-Chloe exclusionary triangle. Most excluded child in the study. Frequent excluder. Well-liked by classmates. Mutually nominated friends with Mia and Jayda.

Christopher: Well-liked by classmates. Mutually nominated friends with Ryan.

Hector: Mutually nominated friends with Jude.

Ida: Part of Jayda-Ida-Chloe exclusionary triangle. Most disliked child in study. Second-highest excluder in study. Mutually nominated friends with Jayda (who also said she disliked Ida). Mutual dislike with Cameron.

Jayda: Part of Jayda-Ida-Chloe exclusionary triangle. Frequent excluder. Disliked by classmates (but also above the median for liked). Classmates nominated her as powerful. Most frequent bystander during exclusion in the study. Mutually nominated friends with Chloe and Ida (but also disliked Ida).

Jude: Most liked child in entire study. Considered powerful by classmates. Mutually nominated friends with Ryan, Nathaniel and Hector. Mutual dislike with Peter.

Liam: Not a subject of direct observations. Classmates nominated him as powerful.

Mia: Mutually nominated friends with Chloe.

Nathan: Mutually nominated friends with Peter.

Nathaniel: Mutually nominated friends with Jude.

Peter: Frequently excluded. Mutually nominated friends with Nathan.

Ryan: Mutually nominated friends with Jude and Christopher.

Afternoon Preschool Class:

Annie: Not a subject of direct observation. Well-liked by classmates.

Asher: Disliked by classmates. Mutually nominated friends with Walt and James. Mutual dislike with Elsie.

Eden: Mutually nominated friends with Marissa and Effie. Mutual dislike with Walt.

Effie: Mutually nominated friends with Eden, Elsie and Leisel.

Eleanor: Mutually nominated friends with Zeke and Leisel.

Elsie: Mutually nominated friends with Zara, Effie and Mikayla. Mutual dislike with Asher.

Emma: Mutually nominated friends with Mikayla.

Gary: Developmentally different (unaware of diagnosis). Disliked by classmates.

James: Mutually nominated friends with Asher.

Leisel: Most powerful child in study. Mutually nominated friends with Eleanor and Effie. Mutual dislike with Zeke.

Mikayla: Mutually nominated friends with Emma and Elsie.

Marissa: Mutually nominated friends with Eden.

Mark: Dropped from study as only observed once. Very rare peer interactions.

Walt: Mutually nominated friends with Asher. Mutual dislike with Eden.

Zeke: Mutually nominated friends with Zara and Eleanor.

Zara: Nominated by peers as powerful. Mutually nominated friends with Zeke and Elsie.

Morning Preschool Class:

Aaron: Mutually nominated friends with Wilson (but also said he disliked him). Mutual dislike with Gavin.

Bailey: Did not speak at school. Rarely made overt attempts to play with peers. Would not complete sociometrics.

Blaine: Vied with Gabrielle for attention of triplets. Frequent excluder. Disliked by peers. Did not complete sociometrics (left school before the end of the year).

Douglas: Mutually nominated friends with Wilson, Keenan and Joel.

Elizabeth: Triplet.Frequent bystander to exclusion. Mutually nominated friends with Marianne and Susan. Mutually nominated friends with (but also said she disliked) both Gabrielle and Lily.

Gabrielle: Vied with Blaine for attention of triplets. Highest excluder in study. Tallest child in class, looks older than her peers. Disliked by peers.

Mutually nominated friends with Susan. Mutually nominated friends with Elizabeth (who also dislikes her). Mutual dislike with Marianne.

Gavin: Disliked by peers. Second most excluded child in the study. Mutual dislike with Aaron, Jacob and Wilson. Mutually nominated friends with Lauren.

Jacob: Well-liked by peers. Disliked by peers. Mutually nominated friends with Wilson and Joel. Mutual dislike with Gavin.

Joel: Peers nominated him as powerful. Mutually nominated friends with Douglas, Keenan, Wilson and Jacob.

Keenan: Liked by peers. Mutually nominated friends with Douglas, Joel and Wilson.

Lauren: Triplet. Frequent excluder. Second highest bystander to exclusion in study. Well-liked by peers. Possibly most powerful triplet. Mutually nominated friends with Gavin and Marianne. Mutual dislike with Wilson.

Lily: Mutually nominated friends with Susan and Maggie. Mutually nominated friends with Elizabeth (who also dislikes her). Mutual dislike with Wilson.

Maggie: Frequently excluded. Mutually nominated friends with Lily. Mutual dislike with Wilson.

Marianne: Smallest child in the class, looks younger than her peers. Mutually nominated friends with Elizabeth and Lauren. Mutual dislike with Gabrielle.

Susan: Triplet. Frequent bystander to exclusion. Mutually nominated friends with Lily, Elizabeth and Gabrielle.

Wilson: Disliked by peers. Mutually nominated friends with Jacob, Douglas, Joel and Keenan. Mutually nominated friends with Aaron (who also dislikes him). Mutual dislike with Maggie, Gavin, Lily and Lauren.

Appendix B: Transcription Conventions

(( ))	Transcriber description and non-verbal actions
( )	Completely unclear speech
(word)	Transcriber's guess at unclear talk
Word [word [word	Separate left square brackets, one above the other with utterances by different speakers indicates a point of overlapping talk
(.)	A pause in speech of .5 seconds or less
(0.5), (2)	A pause in speech of longer duration
?	Rising intonation
.	Falling intonation
!	Animated intonation
Wor::d	The sound preceding the colon is stretched; longer stretches are indicated by more colons
Wor-	A sharp cut-off
<u>Word</u>	Stress or emphasis
WORD	Loud speech
°Word°	Quiet speech
hh	Audible exhalation
.hh	Audible inhalation
Wo(h)rd	Word has laughter in it
(ha)	Laughter

Appendix C: Interview Transcriptions

Chloe's Interview

Suzanne: I was wondering if you would tell me who are three kids that you <u>really</u> like to play with? Like maybe, your three <u>favorite</u> children to play with at school, in your class.

Chloe: Mm::: Jayda?

Suzanne: Mm hmm.

Chloe: Mia?

Suzanne: Mm hmm.

Chloe: And.

Suzanne: Hmm, tricky 'cause you have to look through all of them. If you had to choose who would be your three favorite?

Chloe: I only huh really have like two favorite.

Suzanne: Two favorites? Oh okay. Do you have other friends that you like to play with, but maybe not quite as much? Yeah. Do you want to tell me about those or no?

Chloe: Uh: (.) no no.

Suzanne: No, okay, so Jayda and Mia.

((We begin talking about her play with Jayda and Ida.))

Suzanne: And I was curious about that. So. Do you like playing with Jayda and Ida the same amount or one more than the other or [are you be-

Chloe: [Jayda more that Ida, ‘cause sometimes Ida is a little (1) not (.5) we have lots of prob::lems.

Suzanne: You guys have problems together when it is you and Ida?

Chloe: And Jayda:?

Suzanne: And Jayda uh huh.

Chloe: If (.) the badder and (.) sometimes when Jayda says she’s playing with me, Ida says (.) thinks we should all be together but and when Jayda wants to play with Ida, she wants <u>just</u> Jayda to play with her.

Suzanne: Oh, so like if <u>you</u> and Jayda are already playing together then Ida wants to play too, but if Jayda and Ida are playing together then Ida doesn’t want you to join in? I understand.

Chloe: So I have lots o(h)f problems heh heh.

Suzanne: Yeah that’s sounds like that would create a lot of problems. I wonder why that happens? I don’t know. Do you have any ideas about maybe why Ida does that?

Chloe: If (.) the badder and (.) sometimes when Jayda says she’s playing with me, Ida says (.) thinks we should all be together but and when Jayda wants to play with Ida, she wants <u>just</u> Jayda to play with her.

Chloe: I think because she likes <u>Jayda</u> a lot and she wants to <u>play</u> with her <u>every single day.</u>

Suzanne: Oh, so she really wants to play with her.

Chloe: Every single <u>day</u>.

Suzanne: Mm hmm. Mm hmm.

Chloe: And sometimes she even wants to play by herself, .hh if me and Jayda are playing together.

Suzanne: Oh really.

Chloe: That's how much she likes Jayda. She just wants her all to herself sometimes.

Suzanne: Wow, and so she'll choose to play by herself.

Chloe: Or with Jayda and me or just with Jayda.

Suzanne: Mm hmm. That makes sense. It sounds like maybe it is tricky for her to have (.) to play with a couple people or to have more than one friend?

Chloe: ºYeah I think so:: because I bet I (.5) that's its kind of the same problem with me? 'Cause (.) with doing games?º I think I'm the only one who .hh mostly (.) I used to think (.) I'm the one who like gets to choose 'cause my sister has Down's Syndrome? and she doesn't really play: or think of games for us to play .hh so we don't have very much (.) I (.) very much, ummm compromising lessons .hh so

Suzanne: Wow, so what you are saying [is that

Chloe: [and also so when another kid that's little and has, and doesn't have any siblings

Suzanne: Mm hmm.

Chloe: They might think they're the one who gets to choose and I might think I'm the one! and that's the only problem and Jay- and Ida probably plays by herself 'cause .hh Andrea 'cause her sister is pretty t .hh pretty little

Suzanne: Oh, still too small to play games and to have ideas? So you are thinking at your house you're the leader and maybe Ida's a leader at her house, so when you guys are together it's hard for her because you are both used to making the decisions in the games?

Chloe: Yeah. And also sometimes I don't feel like shar- sharing with my sister, but Maudie doesn't who's my sister .hh doesn't really mind about it.

Suzanne: She doesn't really mind, so you don't really have to do that at home.

Chloe: Yeah so it's really what I do at home that matters, with my whole thing!

Suzanne: Mm hmm. Mm hmm.

Chloe: That's what I learn a lot.

Suzanne: Because yeah you practice things a lot at your house, so if you are practicing different things at home. Wow, it seems like you have thought about this problem a lot huh?

Chloe: Yeah!

Suzanne: Yeah.

Chloe: And I'm feeling like if Ida wants to play with Jayda all the time .hh and Jayda wants to play with Ida a lot and she wants to play with me sometimes .hh then I better just play with Mia (.) a lot.

((turns omitted))

Suzanne: Oh, so Nathan and Jayda are good friends now?

Chloe: It started a long time ago.

Suzanne: I didn't know that. I wonder how that feels for you?

Chloe: It actually feels pretty bad ‘cause and Look. If I want my own special friend to myself that nobody had a best friend to? Well. Jayda’s best friends are (.) Ida, Mia (.5) and Alison. And

Suzanne: Mmmhmmm.

Chloe: And and so: if I want, like my own special best friend that’s a girl I would have to choose Jayda. And Jayda, and if Jayda doesn’t want me as her best friend then guess what?

Suzanne: What?

Chloe: I can’t have my own special friend to myself that’s a girl ‘cause the only other best friend that I have is Nathan.

Suzanne: Mmmhmmm.

Chloe: And ( ) out of school anymore.

Suzanne: Mmmmhmm.

Chloe: So. Sometimes when I feel really really sad and I don’t have anyone to play with, I just (.5) go to the bushes and just stay there for the rest of outside time.

Suzanne: Oh my goodness, that sounds like it must not feel very good! That’s very hard.

Chloe: Yeah! It’s very hard for me .hh to. And it’s very hard for Ida to let me get in the game with Jayda already playing with her ‘cause she likes her so much and she (.) and she kind of does these words out of her mouth that (1) aren’t (.5) as (2) good. She sometimes she says. Sometimes she says, .hh “No Jayda I don’t want to. .hh No, Chloe I

don't want to play with you." And sometimes she says that and I'm just like, okay I'm walking away. Right now.

Suzanne: So you walk away if she says that?

Chloe: Yeah, sometimes I'm like that but sometimes I just stay there and (.) walk off and play with Nathan. So it's easier for me to play with Nathan than even trying getting in the game .hh with Jayda and Ida.

Suzanne: Do you sometimes try to get in the game even if she says that?

Chloe: Actually? Sometimes I get in the game just (.) I actually just play the game with Jayda and Ida quits even.

Suzanne: When does Ida quit?

Chloe: When I- when I pla- play when like (.) Mia .hh Ida and Jayda are playing together. Ida and Jayda and Ida might be at the wagon ( ) someone might be pulling and then .hh I get in the line and say, "Can I play?" And Ida says like, um. Says like, "Well, me and Jayda and Mia are playing together."

Suzanne: Mmmhmmm.

Chloe: And I'm like, "Can't you not (.) play the wagon game and just switch to a game where there are four people?

Suzanne: Oh 'cause in a wagon game it is really hard to have more than three?

Chloe: Actually .hh you're only allowed to have two in the wagon and one pulling.

Suzanne: Which is three. That makes sense.

Chloe: Yeah, but actually also what I was thinking was like, can't you switch it to (holding more people) or something like that? Or switch it to a different game so I could play with you? 'Cause I really like Mia and I really like Jayda. But when (1) Jayda's not playing with Alison, Alison's probably playing with Liam, Hector, Nathan, Nathanial or Cameron. So there's not very many choices for me.

((turns omitted))

Suzanne: Sounds like there's a lot of problems about Ida sometimes, huh?

Chloe: Yeah! Because Ida doesn't. I don't think Ida doesn't have very many fri::ends.

Suzanne: Oh.

Chloe: So she like, so she thinks that (.) she can hh decide more things and stuff like that. But now that she's at school: and she's playing with other people, she doesn't know that she has to really (.) compromise to everyone and have and have- make friends with everyone. I try 'n do that, but sometimes I can't .hh get time to .hh do it with most of the boys. .hh On the first .hh day that it was rainy? We:: me and Nathan were playing with these connecting things .hh and .hh and I was like, "ºBut I need that, but I need that, but I need thatº Wait! Let's make a huge one together!" And we were like "doggy dead, doggy dead do(h)ggy dead." Huh huh.

Suzanne: So you found an idea for both of you to work together? And then it sounds like you had fun after that?

Chloe: Yeah and tha- and then we're like, "Hi! How about we be friends? Yeah!" Da dad a da dee dee. Huh huh.

Suzanne: So then you could be silly together, sounds like you figured out a compromise there, huh?

Chloe: [Yeah, bu:t

Suzanne: [I bet it felt good.

Chloe: Ida just found Jayda and they were best friends and .hh now she li- ºI think she just likes to play with Jayda and nobody elseº .hh which (.) I'm feeling like, (.) if I can make friends with Ida .hh so we can all play together:: and (1) and (.) and maybe Ida makes friends with Nathan so we can all ALL play together. ºAnd maybe sometimes then Jayda will play with just Mia.º And I can't. And Nathan, which Nathan likes Mia and Mia likes Jayda and Jayda likes Nathan so I can- so it's easier for me to get in with Jayda and stuff (.) and

Suzanne: So if everyone was all together then that would be easier?

Chloe: Yeah

Suzanne: That makes sense. Friends are tricky sometimes, huh?

Chloe: Yeah! VERY, VERY tricky.

Jayda's Interview

Suzanne: I was wondering (.) could you tell me who three children are that you really, really like to play with? Maybe the three children in your class that are children that are your favorite children to play with?

Jayda: I like to play with () Chloe? And where's Id-? Ida and Jayda.

Suzanne: Is there anyone besides Ida and Chloe that you like to play with? Is there a third person?

Jayda: ºAnd Alisonº

Jayda: I mean and Cameron.

Suzanne: So let's see, let's look at all of these and see if there's one more person who you might like to play with. Which person is that?

Jayda: ºIt's Alison.º

Suzanne: And what about, is there anyone that you'd rather not play with sometimes?

((Jayda points to Ida)).

Suzanne: Is there anyone else that you'd rather not play with sometimes?

Jayda: No!

((turns omitted))

Suzanne: Sometimes I've noticed that you and Ida play together and sometimes you and Chloe play together. What happens when all three of you play together?

Jayda: Ida gets upset. She (never) does that.

Suzanne: She she gets upset?

Jayda: Uh huh.

Suzanne: Why does she get upset?

Jayda: And sh- because she doesn't like Chloe.

Suzanne: Oh she doesn't like Chloe?

Jayda: She al- When I play with Chloe she she sometimes says, "No! Call you poo poo!" She said that.

Suzanne: About you or about Chloe?

Jayda: Me.

Suzanne: Oh my goodness, I wonder how that felt.

Jayda: No! It felt (.) bad. .hh But an' she also said it today.

Suzanne: She also said it today? Oh no, oh my goodness. So why does she not like Chloe?

Jayda: Auh. be's:::! becau- So she doesn't like Chloe::?

Suzanne: Mmhm. ºThere's yours and there's hersº ((getting out pictures of all 3 children)) Uh huh. So she doesn't like Chloe?

Jayda: Yeah yeah. So she doesn't like Chloe and since and then she calls me poo-poo.

Suzanne: Oh my goodness. That's funny. Hmm. And

Jayda: It's actually not funny.

Suzanne: Oh I mean funny like its kind of weird that she does that. Huh?

Jayda: It <u>isn't</u> like that. It is it's <u>none</u> of that.

Suzanne: It isn't like that? Tell me what it is.

Jayda: ºIt hurt my feelings.º

Suzanne: It hurts your feelings? I can imagine that would hurt your feelings.

Jayda: An' an' then and every and then she 'bouts to cry after she says, "then I'll call you poo-poo sometimes." Hh .hh

Suzanne: Really?

Jayda: Uh yeah. And she als- she cries <u>every day</u> when I play with her? Because .hh she (.) really (.) doesn't ºlike Chloe and I really like Chloe?º

Suzanne: And you really like Chloe?

Jayda: Yeah and then she and then 'cause she makes <u>me</u> play with <u>her</u> a lot. And so, I played with her <u>a lot</u> and then I played with .hh Chloe:.

Suzanne: Uh huh. That sounds like that is a tough choice for you to make, to know what to do.

Jayda: Yeah. I wish- And I also have a loose tooth.

Suzanne: You have a loose tooth? So, what do you wish would happen?

Jayda: I wish that she wasn't, that she wouldn't call me poo-poo.

Suzanne: You wish she wouldn't call you poo-poo? I can understand that. I wouldn't want anyone to call me poo-poo either.

Jayda: You wouldn't play with them if you ca- if somebody called <u>you</u> poo-poo. 'Cause like what would happen if your friend <u>Sara</u> ((a research assistant)), and you were playing with a <u>different</u> gir- girl and you were <u>her</u> friend and Sara maked you play with her. And then when it's you were playing with her Sara sa- called you poo-poo. How would you feel?

Suzanne: I would feel very bad. What do you think I should do then, if [Sarah was calling me poo poo.

Jayda: [Just call the teach-

Suzanne: Oh call the teacher?

Jayda: And just sa-

Suzanne: And if I wanted to take care of it without a teacher is there anything I could do?

Jasyda: You could [just

Suzanne: [Could I say any words to Sara?

Jayda: You can you could just ignore him like, "then I'm not gonna listen to you."

Suzanne: Oh, say I'm not going to listen to you? And do you think that would work?

Jayda: Yeah, then she'll be so upset, she may be call you poo-poo.

Suzanne: But then she may call me poo-poo and then I would have another tough choice to make. I would have to decide if I was going to play with Sara even though she called me poo-poo, or if I was going to play with another friend.

Jayda: Well, if you play with Sara she won't call you poo-poo. She will just be happy and she'll say, "Come on, come on!"

Suzanne: Oh so she would only call me poo-poo if I didn't play with her.

Jayda: Yeah, but if if and then if I sai- And then S::ara might be so little sad, so she maybe call you poo-poo.

Suzanne: But then wouldn't I be sad if I didn't get to play with my other friend and I had to play with Sara?

Jayda: Why?

Suzanne: Well maybe I would like playing with that other friend sometimes.

Jayda: Maybe (.) you ju- you just can't play with (.5) the same people because maybe you have to make <u>new</u> friends.

Suzanne: Maybe I would have to make new friends?

Jayda: Yeah, and then:: and then then you'll have a <u>lot</u> of friends like I made a <u>new</u> friends, now <u>I</u> have a lot of friends.

Suzanne: Oh!

Jayda: And if you make new friends, then <u>you</u> will have a lot of friends.

Suzanne: And then if I had a lot of friends that would help?

Jayda: Well <u>yeah::</u>, but (.) I still didn't make that choice.

Suzanne: You still didn't make that choice? You made the choice to play with Ida?

Jayda: No:: Well I made that choice and I shouldn't make a lot of (.) friends.

Suzanne: Oh, you made the choice that you shouldn't make a lot of friends? How come?

Jayda: ºBecause it might hurt peoples' feelings.º

Suzanne: You are really concerned about hurting her feelings, huh?

Jayda: Yeah.

Suzanne: Oh. Huh. But what about your feelings?

Jayda: They get hurt too and (.) her feelings are hurt.

Suzanne: Sometimes I say that everybody's first job is to take care of their own feelings and then to help other friends.

Jayda: ºTha's. º Well I shouldn't make a lot of frie:nds so I won' so I so I won't so I can' I shouldn't make a lot of frie:nds. I should only make two friends or one friend?

Suzanne: How come though?

Jayda: We::ll to (.) make Ida happy.

Suzanne: Wow. You are really thinking about making her happy.

Jayda: Mmhm. Than just making her sad, that wouldn't be nice.

Suzanne: Why does it make her sad if you play with other people? Does that make Chloe sad too or not as much?

Jayda: Not as much. She says, "okay," but she just says, "just make sure you don't play with her a lot. Make sure you play with me sometimes and them sometimes. That's what Chloe says and that's true.

Suzanne: Oh, and does that feel more comfortable for you?

Jayda: Uh huh.

Suzanne: Oh. So Chloe says play with me sometimes and other friends sometimes, but Ida wants you to play with her all the time.

Jayda: Right.

Suzanne: Yeah. Wow.

Jayda: That makes me s::ad.

Suzanne: I can understand that. I wonder why Ida and Chloe are different that way? I wonder why-

Jayda: People are different.

Suzanne: Yeah, all people are different. You're right.

Jayda: Like you're not the same as me?

Suzanne: That's true, we are different people aren't we?

Jayda: Right? So:: I like .hh these two are different people and they're and then Ida really doesn't know about her. ((Jayda points to pictures of Chloe and Ida as she is saying this.))

Suzanne: Oh, she doesn't know about her? Do you mean Ida doesn't know what Chloe is like?

Jayda: Well, yeah. So she calls me poo-poo. º(And I was like bb her)º

Suzanne: What if she did know what Chloe was like? Would that be different?

Jayda: Yeah!

Suzanne: Oh. Why?

Jayda: Then she will: and then she will, then (.) she won't whine about it and then she maybe won't call me poo-poo.

Suzanne: Because she would want to play with Chloe then or what?

Jayda: She will want to play with her 'cause she (.) like. What would happen if Sara only likeded you and you only likeded Sara?

Suzanne: Oh. It would just be the two of us, huh, and nobody else? But if Sara and I both liked another person we could all play together?

Jayda: Well how 'bout if you if you just didn't like'd Sara, and Sara likeded you, but you didn't like'd nobody. That would be a (bit) terrible.

Suzanne: That would be terrible. I would probably

Jayda: (That would) be a poor choice.

Suzanne: It would be a poor choice?

Jayda: Uh. Would it be a poor choice?

Suzanne: I think it would be a poor choice. I am a kind of a fan of having lots of different friends myself. Because then if I have lots of different friends I know if one friend is feeling a little bit mad at me I still have other friends to be with.

Jayda: Instead of jus-

Suzanne: Yeah, instead of just one. Yeah and also because I have lots of [ideas and we can all play together.

Ida's Interview

Suzanne: I was wondering if you could show me who are three kids that you really like to play with or would really like to play with?

Ida: Hm hm hm! Mhmhmh! ((laughing)) I like! (.) I like these th-

((She points to pictures of Jayda, Mia and Chloe on the table.))

Suzanne: Jayda? Ah. And Mia? Uh huh. And Chloe? Oh okay.

Ida: And may- and (.5) and. Me!

((turns omitted))

Suzanne: Who is your favorite person of those to play with?

Ida: Um::: um: Jay:da.

Suzanne: Oh. And who's your second favorite?

Ida: Um. Chloe

((turns omitted))

Suzanne: And is there anyone in your class who are kind of the leaders of the class, like if they have an idea when you are playing, [then their idea gets done?

Ida: [Well:, it's somebody that I like to play with.

Suzanne: Hmmm.

Ida: It's Chloe!

Suzanne: Oh!

Ida: Chloe's the leader!

Suzanne: Chloe's the leader. Oh. Is there anyone else who is a leader?

Ida: Um:: Everybody in the class?

Suzanne: Mmhm. Anyone in particular?

Ida: Yeah. Somebody el- Well, that's the only leader now? But but (1) I'm a leader too?

Suzanne: You're a leader too?

Ida: Yeah.

Suzanne: Oh okay.

Ida: A long time ago, and (.) but (1) I'm hh. Now I'm not ah ts. (.) Chloe and ºmore of the leader anymore ( ) with her.º

((turns omitted))

Ida: Well: do you know who I plays with most?

Suzanne: Who?

Ida: Hah hah! Jayda and Chloe an::d Mia.

Suzanne: Oh. Do you play with them all together or different at different times?

Ida: Well: I just made new friends with Chloe an and Mia, an and Jayda, so I am playing with them a lot now.

Suzanne: Oh.

Ida: I just started tomorrow.

Suzanne: You just started tomorrow? Wow. Did something change that you made friends with them?

Ida: Mmhm.

Suzanne: What changed?

Ida: Um::: It changed because in the morning I said, "I can play with Chloe." And then, and then Mia comes up and say, "Can I play with you guys?" And then I said, "Okay," and then we played together and then I [made friends.

Suzanne: [And how did it go when you played with all of them?

Ida: Good!

Suzanne: Oh oh. Is it hard sometimes to play with a bunch of people?

Ida: Ye:s.

Suzanne: Like what kinds of things are hard about that?

Ida: Like if Jayda and Chloe want to play a different game?

Suzanne: Mmhm.

Ida: And and me?

Suzanne: Mmhm.

Ida: And we are trying to fight over it? Um.

Suzanne: Oh.

Ida: We we should (.) instead of playing I- eeny-meany-miney-mo, we should (.) we should (.) mix it up?

Suzanne: Oh.

Ida: And then we should play our games.

Suzanne: Oh. Like what do you mean by mix it up?

Ida: Like like (.) we we we get in line and the:n whose the first one that's in line, get to play their game first, and then the second one, and then the last one.

Suzanne: Oh! Okay, so you kind of like play each persons game for a while?

((turns omitted))

Ida: So the:n I was a lil little happy. But (.) I didn't like when Jayda said, "Jayda oh I ah aks we." Jayda and me accidently said bad things. And and Chloe. But I didn't care about because I like playing by myself sometimes.

Suzanne: You do? Do you feel lonely when you play by yourself?

Ida: No.

((turns omitted))

Suzanne: Hey, I have one last question. Do you ever have any problems with your friends? Is anything ever hard with those friends that you were talking about? Like Jayda, or Mia, or Chloe?

Ida: (3)ºUm. No.º (I wanna leave)

Suzanne: Is that a tricky question?

Ida: ºUh. Yes.º

Suzanne: Yeah? Yeah?

Ida: What's this for?

Suzanne: Oh that's just in case we need a microphone for anything.

Ida: That's weird.

Suzanne: 'Cause I notice sometimes when people have a lot of friends? That then like, it's a little tricky to kind of balance all those friends? 'Cause maybe they don't want to play with all of them at once? And maybe they might only want to play with one and sometimes that happens to me where I just want to be with like one friend.

Ida: ºSandi ((her head teacher)) doesn't hear- hear me.º

Suzanne: Sandi doesn't hear you?

Ida: I have ear problem in my ear. The the doctor took out ear wax out of my ear? But its it's now in my ear.

Suzanne: Mm. What. So what doesn't Sandi hear?

Ida: ºUh. She hears a lot. She doesn't hear lots of things.º

Suzanne: Oh. Well Sandi doesn't won't hear this. This is not. This is just you and me and not not anybody else hearing it.

Ida: (Ok)

Suzanne: Yeah. This is private.

Ida: (Umm.)

Ida: Huh huh huh. I am switching.

((Ida is rearranging the photos of herself, Chloe, Jayda and Mia on the table.))

Suzanne: Ah. You're switching.

Ida: And that one goes right there.

Suzanne: Mm:

Ida: (And this one. And)

Suzanne: I see that you're next to Jayda now and then Chloe is next to Jayda and then Mia is next to Chloe. So you're all in a row, but you're on this end, huh? And then Jayda's kind of in the middle there. Next to you and Chloe.

Ida: Well then, because (.) Mia Mia likes Chloe.

Suzanne: Mmhm.

Ida: And Chloe likes Mia.

Suzanne: Mmhm.

Ida: An::d and they both like Jayda?

Ida: An::d we all like them. But Jayda and me like Ryan. So we all like Jayda.

Suzanne: Oh so everybody likes Jayda? And does Chloe like you too?

Ida: Uh huh. I think. (She said just) a little bit. ( ) She mostly just cares about Jayda.

Suzanne: Really? She just cares about Jayda?

Ida: (Yeah.)

Suzanne: Oh my goodness. How do you know that? Like how can you tell that about her?

Ida: Becau:se she doesn't play with me a lot?

Suzanne: She doesn't play with you a lot?

Ida: And she just believes (.) Jayda?

Suzanne: She just believes Jayda?

Ida: Well I'm trying to say the truth.

Suzanne: Oh. Oh.

Ida: And I'm (trying to make) a big deal? And Jayda said, "Well, I don't really." And (.) Chloe says, "I believe her but I I really (.) am telling the truth all the time."

Suzanne: Oh. She says that?

Ida: Mmhm.

Suzanne: And and but you're telling the truth. And then Chloe doesn't believe you?

Ida: Yes, but now we're having (.) fun together.

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